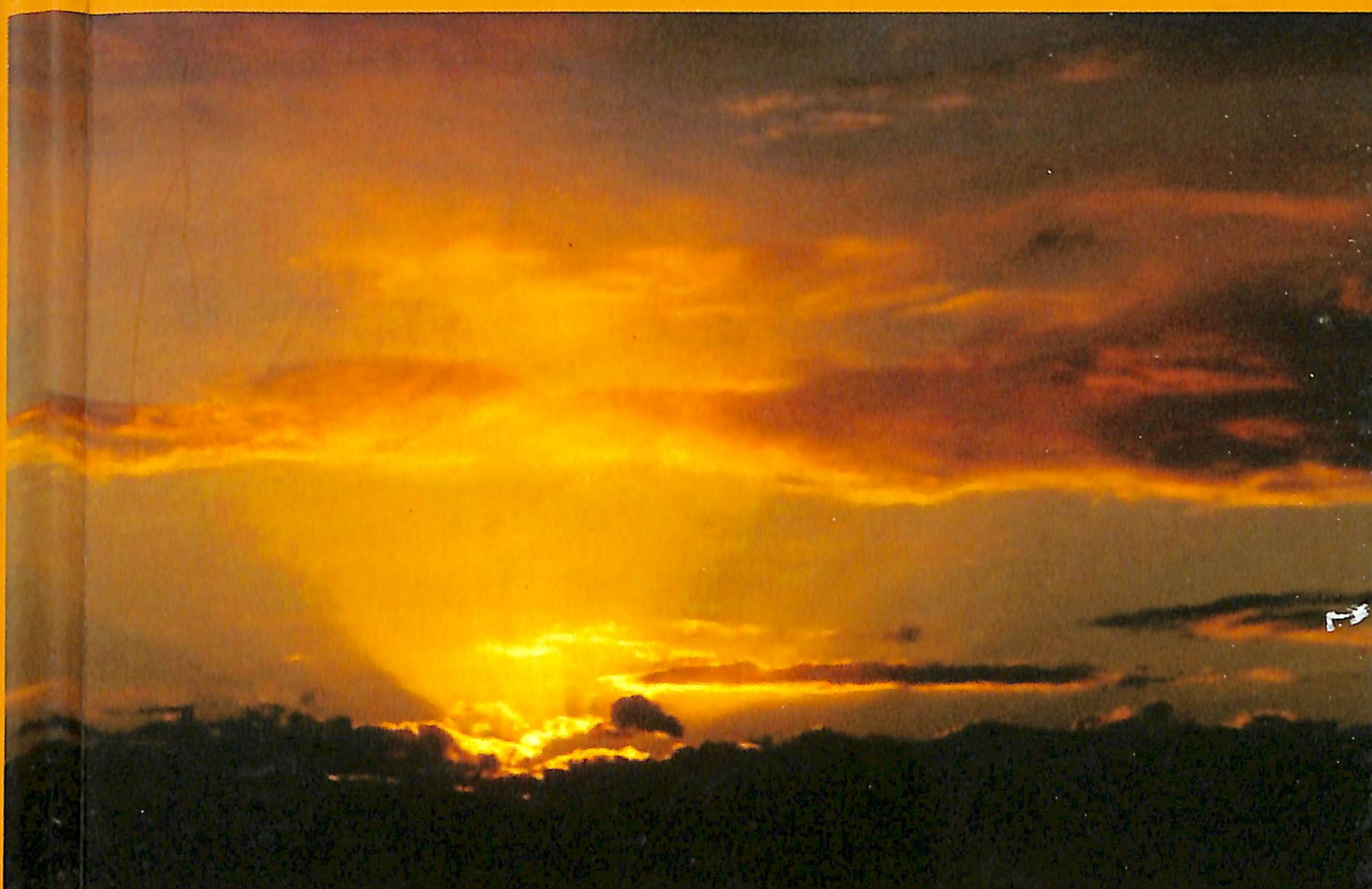
Reason and Experience in Indian Philosophy



BINA GUPTA

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Reason and Experience in Indian Philosophy is a philological and critical analysis of two crucial philosophical concepts, viz., "reason" and "experience." The study shows that, though there is no word in Sanskrit which may be taken as equivalent of Western "reason" and "thought," such terms as *"tarka," "yukti," "nyāya," "anumāna," "buddhi,"* etc., clearly capture parts or aspects of what is meant by "reason" and "thought" (*Denken*). The second goal of the study is to show that it is misleading to translate *"śruti"* as revelation." Construing *"śruti"* as revelation surreptitiously imports a Semitic theological concept into the Vedic tradition. The case of "experience" is more promising because we have such Sanskrit words as *"anubhava"* or *"anubhūti,"* that do translate into "experience." However, "experience" in Western thought has acquired many shades of meaning, and the study determines in what sense the Indian *"anubhava"* captures the Western "experience." Finally, the book demonstrates that Indian philosophy provides an account of the cognitive process that begins with perception and culminates in wisdom (highest experience). This whole process may be called "reason," at both ends of which we can talk of experience, which places experience not in an external opposition to reason, but rather as something that belongs to it internally. Thus, the modern Western opposition between reason and experience collapses and the two *together* yield an integrated process of acquisition, validation, and practical application of knowledge.

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To

Sonya, my granddaughter,

whose entrance into this world
brought the completion of this book to life,

and

whose being informs my new perspective on living.

Begin your own beginning!!!



Contents

Preface

The present work has been in the making for the last six years or so. A fellowship from the National Endowment for the Humanities made it possible for me to take a year's leave from teaching to complete the manuscript. Some of the questions discussed here owe their origin to teaching Indian philosophy for nearly four decades. However, it was in a seminar on the concept of "experience" in Munich in 2003 that the specific issues raised in this work took initial shape. The German scholars were trying to hammer out the concept of "experience" in Indian thought, inspired by the works of Wilhelm Halbfass. The discussions in that seminar opened my mind to several issues surrounding the concept of "experience," and I began to explore them.

In Munich, I presented a paper on the concept of "experience" in Advaita Vedānta. The scholars who heard the paper discussed it threadbare, bringing their vast philological expertise to bear on the issues. I later read a revised version of the paper at a philosophy seminar at the University of Freiburg in Germany. Soon I began to pursue the other half of the theme, viz., the concept of "reason." I first presented a paper on this concept at a philosophy conference held in Vārāṇasī in honor of professor T.R.V. Murti, and subsequently, at a session of the Society for Asian Comparative Philosophy held in conjunction with the American Philosophical Association, Central Division meeting in Chicago, Illinois.

By the time I began my research leave, there was another concept that had captured my mind, viz., "*śruti*," which more often than not is translated as "revelation." I was increasingly becoming impatient with this rendering and the extent to which this translation had taken hold of scholars in the West and India alike. It did not require much philological expertise to see that this translation does not work, which then led me to ponder over such questions as: why did the major Indian philosophers who accepted *śabdapramāṇa* not have a concept of revelation? Why and how was the idea of revelation illegitimately imported from the Semitic religions to corrupt the Vedic discourse? Is the distinction between intuition and discursive, logical reasoning another spurious distinction?

In short, this book brings together two different interests: the epistemological theories of Advaita Vedānta, and the problem of translating Indian philosophical language into Western philosophical language, and *vice versa*. I have published two books on Advaita Vedānta and so, in this sense, the present work is a continuation of previous explorations. However, it is only when the second concern captured my mind that I realized that the two—the nature of Indian philosophies in general and the problems connected with translations between Indian and Western discourses—cannot be separated. How the two interests merged and led to this book, I will explain briefly.

The problem of translating Indian philosophical language into any Western language is not simply a question of finding the right synonyms; in the process of determining how a word in one language is best translated into a word in another language, one soon begins to realize that one must confront such deeper questions as whether a concept available in one discourse is at all available in the other. Pursuit of this question about concepts cannot be

satisfactorily carried out unless and until one is able to determine the nature of these concepts, especially their historical origin and development. Furthermore, if one finds that certain concepts in one language have no exact equivalents in another, this still does not mean that parts of the content of the former cannot be identified in another discourse. In this kind of search, which looks like the investigation of a detective, the problem of translation becomes indistinguishable from serious philosophical inquiry. Thus, the two interests merged into each other in this book.

Discerning readers will notice that in this historical-critical study, I have not merely played the role of a historical scholar attempting to identify the way the concepts of "reason" and "experience," or their equivalents, have functioned in Indian thinking, but I have also expressed my views regarding how these concepts should function in a satisfactory theory of knowledge. Comparative philosophy, I believe, is best done when one is not merely a comparativist but also a critical philosopher. I have sought to be both. I am aware that this is a delicate edge to tread. If this work challenges the readers to further investigate issues raised herein, I will have succeeded in my effort.

It is both a duty and a pleasure to express my sincere thanks to those friends, scholars, and students who have contributed to this work in various ways. It is not possible to list them all individually. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to such scholars as Sibajiban Bhattacharyya, B. K. Matilal, J. N. Mohanty, and Karl Potter, whose books and papers have played a significant role in shaping my views on the issues under consideration. I am grateful to the National Endowment of Humanities for funding this project. I also want to thank Mr. Sang Kim, Director, Asian Affairs Center at the University of Missouri–Columbia, for providing me

with additional funding for this project. Finally, I would like to thank my husband, Madan, and daughter Swati, for believing in me, supporting me, and being there for me when I needed them.

Bina Gupta
September 20, 2008

Part I

Setting up the Stage: Interpretations by Scholars

Chapter One

Introduction

I

General Background: Basic Issues

In the early eighties, I became painfully aware of the deep-seated prejudice that philosophy as a systematic inquiry is exclusively a Western phenomenon and hence absent within non-Western cultures. Indian philosophy represents one of the most ancient intellectual traditions in human culture, yet even today it is not taught in most philosophy departments at major American universities. This neglect stems from a common presumption that philosophy as a systematic inquiry, properly understood, is exclusively a Western phenomenon and hence absent within non-Western cultures.

In the context of India, this presumption stems from the common misconception that Indian philosophy is not directed toward the disinterested search for theory that characterizes Western philosophy; Indian philosophy is rather presumed to be spiritualistic, intuitive, practical, and lacking theoretical rigor. These characterizations of Indian thought have their origins in the works of the 19th century Indologists and carry over into the writings of many 20th century scholars. Radhakrishnan, in his two-volume work

on Indian philosophy declares: "Philosophy in India is essentially spiritual."[1] D.M. Datta makes the same point when he argues: "the common stamp of an Indian culture consists in the unity of moral and spiritual outlook."[2] Again, Moore in his instructive article, "Philosophy as Distinct from Religion in India," spends a great deal of time discussing what he takes to be the primary characteristics of Indian philosophy. In his view, Indian philosophy "is motivated by the practical concern of calling attention to the suffering of the world and how to overcome it, which is opposed to the Western attitude toward philosophy in which inquiry is mainly directed toward the disinterested search for knowledge," "depends on intuition or the "realization" of truth," "dogmatically accepts the authority of the Vedas" and "is absolutistic and mystical."[3]

Keeping in mind the above characterizations, scholars frequently argue that Indian philosophy is based on the "revealed" truth of the Vedas (ancient Hindu scriptures), a record of the spiritual experiences of sages rather than the disinterested search for theory that characterizes Western philosophy, and so is theology at best. Many recent scholarly works by Indian and Western philosophers alike, not to mention journalistic and popular accounts, tend to support these characterizations. Husserl, for example, in his lecture "The Crisis of European Man," distinguishes between the "theoretical attitude" and what he terms the "mythical religious" character of "Oriental philosophies." The theoretical attitude, "thoroughly unpractical," "is based on a deliberate *epoché* of all practical interests."[4] In his judgment, the Greco-European philosophy comprehends all philosophies, and Oriental philosophies are dismissed as something else. "It is a mistake for someone brought up in the scientific modes of thought initiated in Greece and progressively developed in modern times to speak of Indian and Chinese philosophy (astronomy, mathematics) and thus

to interpret India, Babylonia, and China in a European way."[5] Hegel, before Husserl, had argued that Indian philosophers did not raise their intuitions to concepts; thus, only Greco-European philosophy was philosophy. In recent times, many Western philosophers, notably Heidegger, appealing to the history of such concepts as "reason" and "thought," have maintained that both of these concepts are inextricably and inalienably connected with the origins and development of Western thought from the pre-Socratics, through German Idealism and modern philosophy.[6] Such a historical account of the genesis of the concept (*Begriffsgeschichte*) has led many scholars to suspect that non-Western thought systems, e.g., the Indian, could not, and do not, have any place for "reason" or "thought" in their discourse. In more recent times, P. T. Raju, for example, notes: Indian philosophy *is ātman*-centric [soul-centric]. Both the starting point and end of philosophy are the *ātman*.[7]

Basing their interpretations on the above characterizations, most scholars move to the center of their discourse such pairs of oppositions as "reason-experience," "reason-revelation," "discursive-intuitive," and "theoretical-practical," and assign the first member of each pair to the West and the second to the East. Thus, there are two extreme positions: on the one hand, there are the older generations of comparativists, translators of classical Indian texts, and expositors of Indian philosophy, who employ the terms "reason" and "thought" with a great deal of optimism, showing no awareness that there indeed may be a problem in such usages; at the other end, there are those, in my language, "historical cultural relativists," mostly among modern German scholars, who believe that these concepts are inalienably Western and should not be transposed to Eastern thought systems if we want to avoid the charge of Euro-centricity.

It is undeniable that the characterizations of Indian philosophy as "spiritual," "practical," "authoritative," etc., have given rise to several misconceptions about its real nature. Since the middle of the last century, many analytically trained philosophers sensitive to the fragility of philosophical translations have questioned these conventional characterizations of Indian philosophy and brought to the forefront some of the problems associated with these characterizations. Rajendra Prasad, for example, has drawn our attention to the confusion that has resulted from these mischaracterizations.[8] Daya Krishna, another scholar, voices the same protest when he points out that Indian philosophy "is neither exclusively spiritual nor bound by unquestionable infallible authority. . . . . The dead, mummified picture of Indian philosophy will come alive only when it is seen as a living stream of thinkers who grappled with difficult problems, which are, philosophically, as alive today as they were in the ancient past. Indian philosophy will become contemporarily relevant only when it is conceived as philosophy proper."[9]

In recent years, more and more scholars are coming to realize that interpretations of Indian philosophy in light of binary oppositions, which have dominated the comparativist discourse, have distorted the original nature of the Indian philosophical discourse. Many of them have made attempts to rectify the situation. Some of these scholars—in their zeal to demonstrate the discursive, theoretical, rational, and secular nature of Indian philosophy—have argued that Indian philosophy is as rational as its Western counterpart and have assigned one member of each pair of opposition to both Indian and Western philosophy. They declare in no uncertain terms that philosophy in India is as rational and rigorous as its Western counterpart. Matilal, for example, argues: "Verification and rational procedure are as much part of

Indian philosophical thinking as they are in western philosophical thinking."[10] Still others have struggled hard to demonstrate that, contrary to conventional Western interpretations, Indian thought is not only practical and intuitive, it is also secular, rational, and theoretical. J.N. Mohanty, for example, observes that according to the fundamental framework of the Indian tradition, the primary concern is less of purely logical comprehension or precision of analysis, as one notes in the West. Furthermore, logical and epistemological studies are important but they are ancillary to other studies, according to the scriptures.[11] While these scholars depart from the earlier understanding, they implicitly remain committed to the validity of the pairs of opposition and do not question the use or applicability of such fundamental Western concepts as "reason," "experience," "revelation," "intuition," etc., in the Indian context.

In short, this project began with the realization that scholars of Indian philosophy, while reading the original source material in Sanskrit but writing in English, almost exceed the bounds of fair translation and run the risk of more or less risky interpretation because of the lack of philosophical and conceptual clarification of such fundamental concepts as "reason" and "experience" and become victims of one of the two extreme positions outlined above. At the dawn of this new century, it is imperative that scholars overcome the need to classify Indian and Western philosophies in terms of binary oppositions and find a ground between these extreme positions. Indian philosophy must neither be viewed from a religious-theological perspective nor is there any need to unthinkingly foist upon it structures of Western rationality. I have come to be impressed by the need to free philosophy from these oppositions and characterizations so that it can be examined in its own terms.[12] This increasing awareness has compelled

me to find a proper language, so to speak, in which to explain and discuss the structure of the Indian philosophies. By "structure," I mean the logic, the foundation, the rationality that is specifically Indian and refuses to be appropriated into the logic and the rationality of Western thought. This is not to champion a complete separation between East and West, but rather an appeal to keep in perspective the fact that our search for universals should not blind us to the specific features of Indian thought. This felt need has led me to delve deeper into the nature of Indian philosophical thinking and to ponder over many substantive questions regarding its nature.

I am fully aware that when one is dealing with general issues, she is on slippery grounds insofar as her preferences and prejudices may influence her judgment; this is quite different from discussing specific philosophical concepts in Indian philosophical "systems" (*darśanas*), say, "*brahman*," "*ātman*," *sākṣin*,"[13] "*cit*,"[14] and so on. In such cases, the texts provide a constraint on one's tendencies to arrive at conclusions not borne out by the texts and usually it is only after one has done textual research and interpretation that one is in a position to speculate on such general questions as the nature of Indian philosophy. However, here as well, in order to determine the nature of Indian philosophy rather than indulging in free play of one's preferred choices, one may look for specific concepts, and in that case, it would be natural to ask, in what form and shape important Western concepts figure in Indian thought, which, in turn, would lead one to search for their Sanskrit equivalents.

Indian philosophers today, especially those in the West, writing in English and wishing to preserve the authenticity of their interpretation, use Sanskrit sources. But writing in English (or any other language, for that matter) does not amount to simply translating from Sanskrit (if you happen to be thinking in Sanskrit) into English, but rather involves using concepts that are familiar to Western thinkers and

students and identifying them in Sanskrit philosophical discourse. This is no doubt a tricky venture, strewn with possibilities of self-deception and wrong interpretations.

Given that the scholars of Indian and comparative philosophy writing in English use such Western terms as "reason," "revelation," "intuition," and "experience" to characterize the nature of Indian philosophy, I began searching for the Sanskrit equivalents, if any, of these terms, leading me in turn to examine issues surrounding the translations of Sanskrit terms into English. Hence, the obvious question: which Sanskrit terms may be translated as "reason," "experience," "revelation," "intuition," and so on? Other questions that arose are as follows: Are Indian philosophies rational structures, and if so, in what sense? Are Indian philosophies founded on "revealed" truths? Are they founded on experiences, ordinary or supernormal? In using such Western terms as "reason," "experience," and "revelation," "intuition," are we importing into our understanding of Indian thought concepts already loaded with the history of Western religions and philosophies? Clearly, such questions cannot be decided without an examination of the crucial concepts entailed by them.

In this work I primarily focus on two crucial Western concepts: "reason" and "experience," for reasons explained below. I undertake a philological and philosophical analysis of the use and applicability of these concepts in an Indian context. I bring in other important Western concepts, e.g., "revelation," "intuition," and so on, whenever necessary to clarify the two concepts that form the subject matter of this work. In purely conceptual terms, this work is an attempt to decide whether Indian philosophy has been, in its long history, a rational enterprise. If this is the case, then one is under an obligation to identify, not only the Sanskrit terms for "reason," "rationality," etc., but also whether the concept of "reason" is even available in Indian thought, and, if it is, then it needs to be assessed, in what shape it is available.

Indian thinking not only recognizes the possibility of going beyond subject-object distinction, but also shows how this possibility may be actualized. Explication of this process of actualization necessitates an appropriate theory of knowledge that spans the entire range of knowledge, beginning with ordinary sensory perception and ending with knowledge of the highest metaphysical truth. The proposed study will show that, in the Indian context, any cognitive activity is a developing process, and both "reason" and "experience" occupy important places in that continuum.

II

Why Reason and Experience?

One may ask: Why did I decide to focus on these two concepts? The concepts of "reason" and "experience" in Western philosophy have been used in a variety of ways that scholars and students of Western philosophy often find confusing. In epistemological discussions, the two alternatives of empiricism and rationalism have dominated the scene ever since Parmenides. Given that the situation in Western philosophy is so confusing, it is not surprising that Indian philosophical discussions in English (although of course, not in Sanskrit) are worse still, because the terms "reason" and "experience" have no standard translations into philosophical vocabulary, irrespective of whether one has Sanskrit or other modern Indian languages in mind.

In Western thought the opposition between "reason" and "experience" goes back, as stated above, to Parmenides, while the opposition between "revelation" and "reason" to the origins of Judeo-Christian thought. The problem of using the concepts of "reason" and "thought" in the context of Indian philosophy arises, as its necessary correlate, in the context of the concepts of "revelation" and "experience."

"Reason" has its conceptual opposition to "revelation" on the one hand and to "experience" on the other. The two are so inseparably connected that for many historians of Western philosophy, it would be highly problematic to consider only one of them to the exclusion of the other. What I am trying to do is to understand the role of the opposition between reason and experience in Indian thought, while not considering the other opposition, i.e., between reason and revelation. Both oppositions are mingled in the history of Western thought, though the opposition between "reason" and "experience" prevails in modern thought. With this enormous baggage of conceptual-historical development it is surprising that many scholars of Indian philosophy writing in English use these terms apparently without careful thinking, and aptly arousing the suspicions of the more historically minded, perhaps more relativistically inclined scholars.

If the matter were simply of translation, of using technical terms properly, or of representing Indian thought in Western languages, the issues discussed here would be semantic; this, however, is not the case. Semantic issues, questions of correct translation or mistranslation, reflect deep conceptual confusions. For example, let us take the term "*śruti.*" Many scholars, notably Indologists, take for granted that this Sanskrit word translates into "revelation."[15] In its simplest and etymological rendering, "*śruti*" means the "heard text," primarily referring to the Vedic literature because of its oral transmission. Translation of "*śruti*" *as* "revelation" raises serious questions regarding the deep structure of Indian philosophical thinking, and signals a greater danger that many excellent writers do not realize. I believe that translating "*śruti*" as "revelation" creates a conceptual muddle, and brings with it additional conceptual ambiguities.

Those who are familiar with my writings know it well that in many of my earlier publications, I have focused on Advaita Vedānta and for over three decades I have been deeply concerned with the nature of Advaita Vedānta as a philosophical system. I do not have any doubts that the Advaitins do articulate some spiritual experience; however, I am also convinced that Advaita Vedānta is a supremely discursive, logical, and intellectual *darśana*. It is indeed true that *śabda pramāṇa* (word as a source of true cognition) figures prominently in this school; I, however, do not believe, as I will show, that it is accurate to say that Indian philosophy is founded upon something called "revelation."

There is no denying the fact that we do not find an exact synonym of the term "reason" in Sanskrit and so the question arises: is there any synonym of "experience" in Sanskrit? The case of experience is more promising because we have such Sanskrit words as "*anubhava*," "*anubhūti*," "*upalabdhi*," which translate into "experience." However, some of the problems in this context arise from the fact that the term "experience" in Western thought has acquired many different shades of meaning and one is left wondering how these meanings fit into Indian philosophical thinking. In this book, I attempt to sort out some of these issues as clearly as possible.

It is generally concluded that philosophy in the Western tradition has been a rational enterprise, and the very choice of speaking about Indian philosophy, obligates us to examine, and if possible, to substantiate the assertion that Indian philosophy is a legitimate philosophical enterprise, i.e., it is also a rational enterprise. It is important to remember here that if I had conducted this investigation in Sanskrit and had asked questions about the nature of Indian *darśanas* in Sanskrit, the investigation would have taken a different shape. It may well be the case that Indian philosophy is not, in any of the standard Western senses, a "rational"

activity; but even then, it must be explained and justified why what such Indian philosophers as Śaṃkara, Kumārila, Vācaspati, and Udayana, have done is not philosophy. Such issues have led to this book, which focuses on two specific concepts from Western thought and undertakes to identify these concepts in the Sanskrit philosophical discourse. In so doing, I combine the tasks of translation and interpretation. I am aware that literal translation from one language to another—meaning by "literal translation" that which preserves the identity of meaning—is impossible. Even if we agree that there is no such thing as pure translation and that all translations involve interpretation, it is important that we make our interpretations free from arbitrariness as much as possible. Recent scholarship indicates that the two in fact go hand in hand. It is my hope that as a result of this work, scholars of Indian philosophy writing in English will be cautious and not indulge in excessively Euro-centric interpretations, which they often unknowingly undertake.

If Indian philosophy is a rational discourse, what concept of "reason" fits it? There is no single uncontroversial and agreed upon concept of "reason" in Indian philosophy. Words like "*tarka*" (counter-factual argument), "*yukti*" (argument), "*nyāya*" (logic), "*anumāna*" (inference), *manana* or *vicāra* (analytic consideration) designate a kind of thinking and so may be regarded as modes of reasoning. However, etymologically none of them can be rendered by the word "reason," as used in Western metaphysics and epistemology. Borrowing a distinction employed by Eugen Fink,[16] in each of the three terms some form of reasoning is being thematized, i.e., has been made the subject matter; however, the general concept of "reason," both as a faculty of human mind and the generic concept remains hidden. One could say that the concept of "reason"—not unlike the concept of experience with which it is generally contrasted in Western

philosophical discourse—is more likely an *operative concept* rather than a *thematic concept*. In this book however, I am thematizing the concepts of "reason" and "experience" in Indian philosophy. Again, one may ask: if Indian philosophy is not rational, is it empirical? In the Western context, this question has not been pursued by many thinkers. In case one denies both alternatives and holds that Indian philosophy is neither a rational enterprise nor an empirical science, then one is under an obligation to specify its nature in some other terms. There are not many alternatives left, and at this juncture, I will only mention one, namely, philosophical activity in India has been a *hermeneutic activity* that consists in interpreting texts. To a certain extent, it is true of a large segment of Indian philosophical Sanskrit commentaries, a feature that also characterizes many Western philosophical writings. If this is the case, then one has to address the issue whether interpretation of texts is a rational activity.

The concept of "experience" is less problematic in the context of present inquiry than the concept of "reason," because there are few philosophers—irrespective of whether they are of the Eastern or the Western persuasion—who, in talking about the nature of their respective disciplines, claim that philosophy is an empirical research. They might, however, hold, as the Western empiricists do, that many fundamental concepts of philosophy are derived from experience, but they are less likely to hold that philosophy, like many natural sciences, is an empirical discipline. The only philosophers known to me who make such a claim are the Quineans, who hold that philosophy is continuous with science, meaning by "science" empirical behavioristic psychology of the Skinnerian type. In general, keeping in mind the Western empiricist tradition, it would be fair to regard philosophy as a rational enquiry into the nature of experience as its *subject matter*. Nevertheless, such

thinkers as Hume, Kant, James, and Dewey, make use of a certain concept of "experience" to explain the nature of philosophy. Thus, in an attempt to explain the nature of Indian philosophy, it makes perfect sense to ask: what concept of "experience" is available in Indian thought? Scholars writing on Indian philosophy in English generally use such expressions as "intuitive experience," "mystic experience," and so on, which provide the context for looking into which Sanskrit terms translate "experience" best. In switching from English to German, we find that the two words used for experience, "*Erfahrung*" and "*Erlebnis*," have different meanings, and it remains to be determined, in what sense, if any, these German words correspond to Western senses of the concept of "experience". To sum up: though the concept of "reason" is of utmost importance, "experience" also factors in, because the two concepts are often defined in contrast to each other.

Before proceeding to the tasks at hand, let me pause briefly to say a few words about the concept of "revelation," which in common parlance is contrasted with "reason." One may ask: why, and how, does revelation come in? Many basic concepts of Western philosophical discourse begin with Judaism and Christianity, a discourse that stems from a certain understanding of time, of the creation of the world and the destiny of human beings on earth, and of the moral law as a command of God to human beings. These are sufficient to engage philosophers in systematic rational thinking. However, one wonders how reason *vis-à-vis* revelation was understood at the dawn of Western philosophy, given that reason and rational discourse are grounded in revelation in the Judaic-Christian experience. (Note that in the last sentence, all three concepts—"reason," "revelation," and "experience"—occur.) Accordingly, one is not surprised to note that this structure, i.e., reason as grounded in revelation, serves as a guiding principle for Western interpreters of Indian thought.

Scholars and defenders of Indian thought have not been very far from this position. Philosophical thinking in the Vedic hymns is said to be grounded in the "revelation" of *śrutis,* which stand at the beginning of Hindu culture. Accordingly, one finds a certain, unquestioned rendering of "*śruti*" as "revelation." Just as one cannot understand the nature of mathematical reasoning in the absence of recognizing the self-evident truths of its axioms, one cannot understand the rational speculations of the Hindus without tracing them back to the "revelations" contained in the Vedas. They either accept the locution "revelation" or replace it by the talk of "mystic experience," meaning thereby that *śruti* is the record of the mystic experience of the sages. It is worth noting that here experience replaces revelation in a unique manner.

My concern with the idea of "revelation" in the context of Indian thought began with my conviction that the word "*śruti*" does not translate into "revelation." It led me to wonder why this translation has persisted despite its deceptive obviousness, and why scholars still believe that it would be remarkable to notice surreptitiously that the idea of "revelation" accompanies in some manner the idea of mystical experience. It is important to keep in mind that I am not concerned with this concept *per se,* but only insofar as it is relevant in determining the nature of Indian philosophy. It is through this circuitous path that the concept of "experience" leads to the concept of "revelation," and questions of translations do not stay far behind.

Once these two concepts ("reason" and "experience") are clarified, both in their Western forms and with regard to their applicability in an Indian context, we may be able to cut through years of confusing studies on this theme, and let the true nature of Indian philosophical discourse shine through the clarity of its own light.

III

Goals of this Work

The first goal of this book is to show that, although there is no word in Sanskrit that may be taken as equivalent of the Western terms "reason" and "thought," such Sanskrit terms as "*tarka*," "*yukti*," "*nyāya*," "*anumāna*," "*buddhi*," etc., clearly capture aspects of what is meant by "reason" and "thought" (*Denken*). They involve rational considerations of a thesis by giving reasons for the acceptance of the thesis and refuting all arguments meant to prove that the position under consideration is impossible (*asambhāvanābuddhi-nirākaraṇa*). These Sanskrit terms have different meanings and usages in different schools of Indian philosophy; for example, Śaṃkara uses "*tarka*" in a very general sense, and not in the specific sense of a counter-factual argument in which the Nyāya (a realist and analytic school of Indian philosophy) uses it. In the broadest sense, "*tarka*" means any logical argument whatsoever, and Śaṃkara (the "founder" of Advaita Vedānta *darśana* or "school" of Indian philosophy) uses it in this sense; in a somewhat narrower sense, it stands for *anumāna* (inference having the standard syllogistic structure).

I maintain that although Indian thinkers do not *thematize* about "reason" *per se*, a *conception* of reason and a clear understanding of its various kinds is there. I maintain that the theory of *pramāṇas* (means of true cognition) as advanced in Indian philosophical systems is a theory of reason. A *pramāṇa* is that by which a *prameya* or an object of knowledge is established, proven to be. *Pramāṇas* not only give an account of the way a true cognition is generated, but also a theory of justification insofar as each is a way of validating one's beliefs. Nyāya recognizes four *pramāṇas*, viz., perception, inference, comparison, and *śabda*. Advaita

Vedānta accepts two additional *pramāṇas*: postulation, and *anupalabdhi.* Thus, insofar as *pramāṇa* theory is a theory of justification and also gives reason for *its own* validity, it is a theory of reason. In the Indian context, a causal theory and a theory of justification are inseparably blended together.

Thus, though reason as a faculty is not entirely absent in Indian philosophy (it is found in Advaita Vedānta and Sāṃkhya in their conceptions of *buddhi*, for example), reason is usually closer in meaning to the mundane activity of justifying one's beliefs by giving reasons for them. Reason, in other words, includes all the *pramāṇas*, all means of true cognitions, as well as the means of validating beliefs. I argue that Indian philosophers deal with three levels of reasoning: the primary level of validating beliefs about objects, the secondary level of aiming at a unified cognition of reality as a whole through the joint application of the different *pramāṇas* by *pramāṇasaṃplava*, and the tertiary level of critical self-reflection on the part of reason, as manifested in philosophy as a *pramāṇa* theory, justifying itself relentlessly.

The case of "experience," as stated earlier, is more promising because we have such Sanskrit words as "*anubhava*" or "*anubhūti*" that do translate into "experience." However, "experience" in Western thought has acquired many shades of meaning, and the second goal of the study is to determine in what sense the Indian "*anubhava*" captures the Western concept of "experience." I discuss two kinds of experiences, *parokṣa* (mediate) and *aparokṣa* (immediate) that one finds in Indian epistemologies.

I also focus on the Vedānta notion of *aparokṣa anubhūti*, i.e., the immediate experience of the identity of the *brahman* (absolute reality) and the *ātman* (soul). I will explore the question: if the immediate experience is an *anubhava* of the identity between the *ātman* and the *brahman*, then can this identity be asserted after the complete dissolution of

phenomenal differences? I critique this notion on the ground that, in this concept of "experiencing an identity," there is inevitably a trace of the already superseded experience of difference and a rational critique of that difference. It cannot be a case of pure experience of identity.

The third goal is to show that it is misleading to translate "*śruti*" as "revelation" (understood more than a question of simple translation). Construing *śruti* as revelation surreptitiously imports a Semitic theological concept into the Vedic tradition. I also explore the question: Is *śruti* revelation? "*Śruti*" literally means "the heard text"; it is an erudition acquired by listening to a teacher's instruction that has been transmitted to that teacher through an uninterrupted series of prior teachers. Even if experiences of some sort *occasioned śrutis*, they are still texts that at some point had to be heard, but are now read, and interpreted with the help of the rules of interpretation—grammar, etymology, context, etc. *Śruti* defines the tradition on which Indian thinkers take their stand; it is both the basis and an aspect of reason. I show that opposing "reason" to *śruti* construed as "revelation" or "authority," though conventional among English writings on Indian philosophy, is not only totally mistaken, but it blocks an authentic understanding of the nature of philosophical activity in Indian thought.

Finally, as we elaborate on the *pramāṇas*, especially in Advaita Vedānta, we are confronted with one of the curious features of this theory. One of the *pramāṇas*, which almost all the systems of Indian philosophy accept, is *pratyakṣa*. If the theory of *pramāṇas* is a theory of reason, then it would seem that perception itself is included within reason. To give reasons for why one accepts a belief, one can very well say that "that is how I perceive the thing." This simple statement implies that the difference between experience

and reason, as it has been drawn in Western philosophy, can hardly be sustained. The reason perception has been devalued in Western thought as mere opinion (*doxa*) as contrasted with rational knowledge, e.g., in mathematics, is because perception was regarded as an experience of merely subjective data, which is true only to the perceiving individual, whereas rational thought was universal and necessary. It seems to me that this contrast is spurious. For Indian philosophers, perceptual knowledge as a *pramāṇa* presents its own object and justifies the validity of a perceptual belief. If I see that that flower is red, and if all the conditions of a true perceptual belief are fulfilled, then the flower is red.

I therefore hold that the contrast between reason and experience as drawn in Western philosophy beginning with Parmenides and the Platonic Dialogues cannot be accepted. The concept of "reason" is broad enough (as is the concept of *pramāṇa* in Indian philosophy) to include the various modes of justification of one's claim to know. Each *pramāṇa* is a way of validating one's beliefs, while at the same time, each is also a way in which one's beliefs are generated. Many scholars, e.g., Matilal and Mohanty, have emphasized, how a causal theory and a theory of justification are inseparably blended together.

A *pramāṇa* is that by which a *prameya* or object of knowledge is established, proven to be. If reason means (as in recent times, Husserl, drawing upon classical sources has argued) experience of being as it is, then a *pramā*—which is produced by a *pramāṇa*—is exactly such an experience in which the *prameya* or whatever happens to be the object of knowledge, is experienced as it is. The difference between rational knowledge, which is universal and necessary, and perceptual experience, which is subjective, is a spurious distinction.

IV

Structure of this Work

This book is divided into four parts, subdivided in seven chapters and three appendices. The first chapter, the present Introduction, delineates the scope of the study and addresses cross-cultural and theoretical issues concerning the nature of the problem, the received traditions of interpretation of the roles of "reason" and "experience" (as per Hegel, Husserl, Heidegger, Radhakrishnan, and Halbfass), and the need for a fresh evaluation of these roles. Of particular interest here is, on the one hand, the views of such philosophers as Radhakrishnan who argued that Indian philosophy is spiritualistic and, on the other hand, the views of some Western philosophers, e.g., Heidegger, who forcefully argued that such concepts as "reason" and "thought," are inalienably connected with the origins and development of Western thought from the pre-Socratics through German Idealism and modern philosophy and, hence, are absent in such non-Western cultures as Indian. It is my hope that this work would show that such accounts are one-sided; they are misleading and have been responsible for many misconceptions about the nature of Indian philosophy.

Chapters Two through Five deal with the concepts of "reason" and "experience" in three Indian philosophical schools. To be specific, Chapter Two is on the Buddhist philosophies, Chapter Three on the "Nyāya," and Four and Five focus on Advaita. These chapters orient the readers to the philological and conceptual questions about such key terms as "*śruti,*" "experience," "*anubhava*" and its cognates, "reason," and other associated terms such as "*tarka,*" "*yukti,*" and "*nyāya*" (Śaṃkara, Gautama, Dignāga) in Sanskrit commentaries. I make use of such Western concepts as

"Vernunft," "Verstand," "Erfahrung," "Erlebnis," etc., to further clarify these Sanskrit terms.

In order to make clear the two senses of *anubhava* or *anubhūti*, I make use of a distinction that modern German philosophers have made between *"Erfahrung"* and *"Erlebnis."* Both of these are used to translate the English word "experience" into German, but the difference between the two is very important philosophically. The concept of "experience"—especially as defined by Hegel in his *Phenomenology* and the etymology of *Erfahrung* proposed by Heidegger—are examined in the Indian context.

Chapters Six and Seven of the book are a comparative study of "reason" and "experience" in the East and West. It does not seem prudent to compare Indian and Western conceptions of reason and experience without first saying something about the nature and function of these concepts within the Western context. Accordingly, chapter Six contains a brief discussion of these concepts as they obtain in Western thought. This discussion provides the background against which I compare the use of these concepts in Indian and Western thought. It is only after I have come to grips with the main varieties of the concepts of "reason" and "experience" that are available in Western thought that I would be in a position to compare the concepts of "reason" and "experience" in the two traditions. Accordingly, these chapters (i) provide a brief survey of the concepts of "reason" and "experience" in Western thought, (ii) compare these concepts in two traditions, and (iii) conclude with a discussion of the typology of experience, such as sensory, aesthetic, moral, and religious.

Three appendices contain my reflections on *śruti* as revelation, *anubhava* as a *pramāṇa,* and the concept of "intuition."

In sum, in this work I show that thinking in terms of pairs of oppositions shows a laziness of thinking, and a

fundamental subservience to Euro-centricity. Those who create oppositions of "thought" and "reality," "reason" and "experience," start with a narrowly defined conception of both. In including *śruti* as a component of the total structure of reason, I argue against any understanding of *śruti* that opposes it to "reason" and takes it to mean "revelation," or even a higher experience, or a supra-rational authority. As reason develops from sensory perception to an understanding of *śruti*, experience also undergoes a parallel transformation. The two concepts, "reason" and "experience," are inseparably intertwined—nay, they are in fact two aspects of the same cognitive process. Indian philosophy provides an account of the cognitive process that begins with perception and culminates in wisdom ("highest experience"). This whole process may be called "reason," at both ends of which we can talk of experience, which places experience not in an external *opposition* to reason, but rather as something that belongs to it internally. In my analysis, standard modern Western opposition between reason and experience breaks down and space is freed up in which Indian thought can find its own voice. In Indian philosophy, reason and experience yield an integrated process of acquisition, validation, and practical application of knowledge.

Endnotes

1. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1927), Vol. I, pp. 24–25 & 41.
2. Satischandra Chatterjee and Dhirendramohan Datta, *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy* (Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1960), p. 12
3. Charles A. Moore, "Philosophy as Distinct from Religion in India," *Philosophy East and West*, Vol. XI (1961), pp. 5–7.

4. In Edmund Husserl, *Phenomenology and the Crisis of Philosophy*, translated by Quentin Lauer (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1965), p. 168.

5. Translator's comments about Husserl's views are worth noting: "Aside from the fact that he knows little or nothing of Eastern thought, Husserl here repeats the arbitrariness of 'Philosophy as a Rigorous Science,' where he simply decides what philosophy is (in an essential intuition, of course) and refuses to dignify with that name whatever does not measure up." Ibid., p. 171.

6. Martin Heidegger, *Was Heisst Denken*? (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1954). Hereafter this work will be cited as *Was Heisst Denken*? See English translation entitled *What is Called Thinking*? by Fred Wieck and Glenn Gray (New York: Harper & Row, 1954). Henceforth this translation will be cited as *What is Called Thinking*?

7. P. T. Raju, "The Western and the Indian Philosophical Traditions," in S.S. Rama Rao Pappu and R. Puligandla (eds.), *Indian Philosophy: Past and Present* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1982), p. 88. Henceforth this book will be cited as *Indian Philosophy: Past and Present.*

8. "It is my feeling that the emphasis on the practical character of Indian philosophy has been overdone and it has caused more harm than good to its proper study. It has been very greatly responsible for not letting people pay adequate attention to the really philosophical, in the current sense of term, issues—logical, epistemological, ethical, semantical, even metaphysical, etc., which were thoroughly discussed by Indian philosophers. It has also resulted in the impression in the minds of many that Indian philosophy is philosophy in a sense different from the one in which Western philosophy is philosophy. This is noticeable from the fact that most Western scholars who have taken interest in Indian philosophy are not professional philosophers but orientalists or theologians." Rajendra Prasad, "The Concept of Mokṣa ," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol. XXI, No. 3 (1971), pp. 382–383.

9. Daya Krishna, "Three Myths about Indian Philosophy," *Indian Philosophy: A Counter Perspective* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 14–15.

10. B. K. Matilal, *Epistemology, Logic, and Grammar in Indian Philosophical Analysis* (The Hague: Mouton, 1971), p. 11.

11. J. N. Mohanty, "Indian Philosophy Between Tradition and Modernity," *Indian Philosophy: Past and Present*, p. 240.

12. Modern Literary Theory, Gender Studies, and Cultural Studies have already brought to the forefront a reconstruction of the theories of colonized cultures and the necessity of a "postcolonial" account. I do not call myself a "postcolonial" critic, but I do think that the rise of "postcolonial" voice has a way of letting the indigenous voices assert themselves.

13. Bina Gupta, *Disinterested Witness: A Phenomenological Analysis* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1998). Henceforth this book will be cited as *Disinterested Witness.*

14. Bina Gupta, *Cit (Consciousness)*, (New Delhi, India: Oxford University Press, 2003). Henceforth this book will be cited as *Cit*.

15. See W. Halbfass, *Tradition and Reflection: Explorations in Indian Thought* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1991), especially pp. 33–41 and Chapter 5. Hereafter this work will be cited as *Tradition and Reflection.*

16 Eugen Fink's distinction is primarily directed against the Husserlian idea that philosophy can be entirely presuppositionless. Using Heidegger's teachings that thinking always presupposes some unthought presuppositions, Fink shows that whenever we thematize some concept, there is an unthematized concept that operates behind it. It is like whenever you illuminate something, there is always a shadow cast by the thing that is being illuminated. One cannot eliminate all shadows, one may try to illuminate that which is now in the shadow, but then some other aspect remains hidden in the shadow. Husserl himself, to take an example, thematized on the structure of consciousness, but could never adequately illuminate it; the idea of reduction remains an operative concept in his philosophy, though never fully thematized. In present cases of the logician, or the analytic thinker, the *pramāṇa* theorist may think that he has elaborated its nature.

Part II

Reason and Experience in Indian Philosophies: Methodological Considerations

Chapter Two

Reason and Experience in Buddhist Philosophies

I

Of all the schools of Indian philosophies, many regard the Buddhist philosophy to be the most antirational. When one thinks about the place of reason in the Buddhist philosophies one is inevitably led to highlight its anti-rationalistic tendencies. There is a *prima facie* plausibility for this view, and the following chain of thinking would seem to lead to such a conclusion. It is argued that reason is absent in the Buddhist thinking irrespective of how "reason" is understood in Western Philosophy, because for Western philosophers reason is a faculty of thinking through concepts, and the Buddhist philosophies, at least in some of their forms, as we will see shortly, amount to deflating the value of conceptual thinking and teach that we return to pure, i.e., non-conceptual experience. Reality, in the Buddhist view, so we learn, is a momentary series of pure particulars familiarly known as "*svalakṣaṇa*" (unique particular), which do not contain any "common marks" (*sāmānyalakṣaṇas*). If this is so, then the only *pramāṇa* or the means of true cognition is *nirvikalpaka* (non-conceptual and non-linguistic) perception, and, other purported means of true cognition, e.g., *anumāna* (inference) and *śabda* (word),

will have to be relegated to the status of giving only mental constructions.

In reviewing the history of the Buddhist schools beginning with Nāgārjuna (150 CE), we note that he had radically critiqued metaphysical speculations and encouraged negative attitudes towards rational thinking. Using a method known as *prasaṅga* or *reductio ad absurdum*, he demonstrates that all perspectives about reality involve self-contradiction.

At the outset, Nāgārjuna argues that two possible predications about a putative reality, say an object A, are "A is" and "A is not." The conjunction and the negation of the conjunction give rise to yet two more possibilities: "A both is and is not" and "A neither is nor is not," which together with the first two yield, when all four are negated, a four-cornered negation (*catuṣkoti* or quadrilemma). Nāgārjuna analyzes these four alternatives and by drawing the implications of each alternative, demonstrates that it is impossible to erect any sound metaphysics on the basis of reason. Let me give an example. With respect to causation, these four possibilities translate into: (1) a thing arises out of itself, (2) a thing arises out of not-itself, (3) a thing arises out of both itself and not-itself, and (4) a thing arises neither out of itself nor out of not-itself. Nāgārjuna argues that on the first alternative (the Sāṃkhya view) cause and effect become identical; the identity of cause and effect points to their non-difference. Thus, any talk about their being causally related is superfluous. On the second alternative (the Nyāya view), cause and effect become entirely different; thus, there can be no common ground between the two to make the relation of causality possible. Accordingly, the second alternative is equally illogical. He further argues that since the first and the second possibilities are meaningless, the remaining two possibilities that arise out of the conjunction and the negation of the conjunction are equally meaningless.

Nāgārjuna makes use of his critique of causal relation and applies it ruthlessly to demonstrate that not only the concepts and the doctrines of the rival schools (permanence, substantial self, etc.), but also the central Buddhist doctrines (momentariness, *karma, skandhas*, and even the very idea of the Buddha as "having attained thus" [*Tathāgata*]), contain inherent self-contradictions. Every concept, argues Nāgārjuna, acquires meaning only when contrasted with its complement, and in that sense every concept implies its own negation. Nāgārjuna examines various metaphysical theories that existed in Indian thought during that time, e.g., Vaiśeṣika theory that a material object consists of simple atoms; the Sāṃkhya theory that material objects arise out of simple undifferentiated stuff called *prakṛti* or nature; the early Buddhist theory that reality is a process, or, better yet a series of instantaneous events, and shows that in each of these cases the concepts employed (e.g., that of the part and whole, the simple and the composite, permanence and change, undifferentiated nature and differentiated entities), imply their opposites— and to the extent they do, the theses incorporating them cannot be coherently formulated. Since, for example, the concept of a chair is incoherent, the alleged thing chair is also empty, which is to say that it is devoid of self-nature. Thus, for Nāgārjuna, it does not make sense to ask whether things exist or not. Ascribing existence to a thing is only a matter of pragmatic usefulness, not one of attributing ontological reality to it. Accordingly, Nāgārjuna concludes that since no entity can be characterized in itself as having an essence (i.e., being simple, being permanent, being instantaneous, being a whole, or being a part), such putative entities are "empty."

Divergent theories of reality are, on this view, only conceptual constructions (*vikalpas*) in which each construction focuses upon a particular point of view. Thus, there is no absolute truth in the phenomenal realm; truth is

always relative to a conceptual system. However, the phenomenal world is not the only kind of reality; there is also the higher or the absolute truth (*paramārtha-satya*). Absolute truth transcends the perceptual-conceptual framework of language; it is *nirvāṇa*. In other words, *nirvāṇa* and *saṃsāra* are not two ontologically distinct levels, but one reality viewed from two different perspectives. Thus, *nirvāṇa* is the recognition of things as they are without any conceptual construction; it is the right comprehension of *saṃsāra* in which the plurality of names and forms is manifested. Everything is *nirvāṇa*; it is *śūnya*, which is an experience that cannot be communicated linguistically, being devoid of conceptual construction. Even the concept of *śūnya*, from a lower point of view, signifies lack of self-nature; however, from the higher, the transcendent point of view, it signifies the incoherence of all conceptuality.

Vasubandhu (480 CE.), after Nāgārjuna, denies the existence of the external world in the sense in which realist metaphysicians take it. In the *Twenty Verses*,[1] he defends Yogācāra from objections by the realists who believe in the existence of an external world, and in the *Thirty Verses*,[2] he further develops and details his theses. Thus, in the phenomenal realm there is no absolute truth; truth is always relative to a conceptual system. The phenomenal world has only a pragmatic reality, which is also called conventional (*samvṛti*). Conventional truth, however, is not the only kind of truth. There is also the *paramārtha-satya*, i.e., the higher or the absolute truth. The world, according to Buddhist teachings, pertains only to the phenomena, the pragmatic, or the conventional level (these are used synonymously by the Buddhists); however, from the point of view of the absolute truth, the manifold world of names and forms is simply an appearance. Absolute reality transcends the perceptual-conceptual framework of language; it is unconditional and devoid of plurality. It is *nirvāṇa*. Such a

truth is realized by intuitive wisdom (*prajñā*). It is non-dual and contentless. It is beyond language, logic, and sense perception.

Cognitions, argues Vasubandhu, arise without depending on any putative object. In response to the objection that in the absence of external objects we will not be able to account for spatio-temporal determinations of cognitions, Vasubandhu argues that external objects are perceived in dreams and hallucinations, although none is actually present. Conversely, he argues that perceptions do not justify the existence of external objects. He defines perception as an awareness that arises from the very object by which that awareness is specified. In other words, perception is a cognition that is directly caused by the object of which it is a cognition. It is indeed true that the awareness of X, if veridical, is caused by X; but X, in this context, is not a putative external object but the percept or object-form which "floats" in that very awareness, which Vasubandhu calls the *ālambana pratyaya*. The cognition of fire, for example, is a perception, which is produced by fire as an existing fact. On the other hand, the cognition of a snake in the rope is not perception, because it is not produced by the object of which it is a cognition; the snake does not exist at the time and the place where it is perceived, and, accordingly, cannot causally determine the cognition of the snake. Similarly, inferential cognition of fire is not perception, because it is not directly and exclusively produced by fire as an existent fact. For the Buddhists, then, what we perceive are not objects, for example, books, tables, chairs, pitchers, etc., nor a collection of universals and particulars, but a form (*ākāra*)[3] or content of the cognition.

The mind fabricates its own objects. Residual impressions generated by past experiences in turn generate ideas in the mind and these ideas are called "objects." How we see, to a large extent, is determined by previous

experience and our experiences are intersubjective. To the question how an intersubjective world is possible in the absence of external objects, Vasubandhu refers to the illusory experience of hell shared by persons with a common *kārmic* heritage.

In the *Thirty Verses*, Vasubandhu argues that the alleged external world is nothing more than a projection of consciousness. At the outset, he informs his readers that consciousness undergoes three modifications. The first modification is *ālaya-vijñāna* or store-consciousness, the repository of all *vāsanās* (traces of past experience). It is the realm of potentiality. The second modification of consciousness is *manas* or thought-consciousness. It is the transformation of these potentialities into actual thoughts. The third modification is *pravṛtti-vijñāna* or active-consciousness, which manifests itself in the contents of various mental states and the alleged external objects. These modifications of consciousness create the mistaken belief that there are such objects as trees, tables, chairs, etc. that exist independently of consciousness. Vasubandhu outlines how each of these modifications can be overcome and perfect wisdom attained. The state of perfect wisdom is pure, i.e., it has no object; it is without passions; it is a state of peace and joy.

It is worth noting that Vasubandhu distinguishes three "natures" or "realms": that which is imagined (*parikalpita*) but appears to be real; the empirical realm or the realm of causality (*paratantra*) which accounts for our mistaking impermanence for permanence; and the absolute or perfect realm (*parinișpanna*) which is the ultimate truth of all events, the true nature of things (*dharmatā*). The last is "suchness" or "thatness," i.e., a nature which cannot be conceptually and linguistically articulated, which is not a universal shared by many particulars; it is each event's own unique nature; it is *nirvāṇa*. Repeated meditative practices remove past

residual impressions, and when all defilements and conceptual constructions are purified, one is enlightened.

After Vasubandhu, two famous Buddhist philosophers Dignāga (480-540 C.E.) and Dharmakīrti (600-660 CE), develop their own logic and epistemology. They do not mention central Yogācāra concepts, for example, *ālaya-vijñāna*, but they do make use of the basic Yogācāra thesis of consciousness. Dignāga discusses interdependent function of consciousness in terms of two *pramāṇas*, viz., perception and inference. Dignāga does not provide a definition of perception *per se*; however, he describes perception as that which is free from mental constructions (*kalpanā*), unconnected with name, universal, etc.[4] Dignāga drops the term "non-illusive" (*abhrānta*) from his description of perception that Yogācāra philosopher Asaṅga had used in his definition, and argues that the inclusion of *abhrānta* is superfluous because *kalpanāpoḍham*, i.e., "being devoid of all conceptual constructions" assures the unerring character. A perception is unconnected with any name, because it is possible to perceive a thing without knowing its name. He argues that perception excludes such *kalpanās* as name (*nāma*), universal (*jāti*), etc. Direct perception is not mediated; it is pure sensation, prior to any words or imagining. In perception only the bare particular is apprehended. Let me give an illustrative example. When I perceive, say, a chair, I only see its specific characteristics and when I attempt to describe it to others, in my description I can only use the common characteristics that apply to a class of chairs; it is not possible to convey the characteristics specific to that individual chair. The concepts are products of imagination; they are thus close to what the *Yogasūtras* call "*vastuśūnyo vikalpaḥ,*" i.e., "mental constructions that lack an objective reference."[5] Dignāga argues that the real is a unique particular (*svalakṣaṇa*) and the so-called universal is a mental construction (*vikalpa*), which introduces elements

that do not exist by necessarily tying the thing to language by giving it a name, and in so doing distort what is given in pure perception. Only *nirvikalpaka* perception, freed from name, universal, class, etc., can deliver truth by presenting a pure particular, i.e., *svalakṣaṇa*. A perceived particular being unique cannot be described in words and concepts, because words and concepts only express aspects of objects that are common to many things.

It is now easy to see why in Dignāga concepts have neither any ontological status nor any truth-giving role. His theory of concepts borders on a sort of nominalism, which holds that a concept is a mere name having no ontological ground. Thinking as distinguished from pure perception could only be imagination. Accordingly, the Buddhist theory of meaning of a general term lies in the negative function of exclusion or *apoha,* which does not designate any reality. All *pramāṇas*, leaving aside the one most reluctantly admitted, viz., *nirvikalpaka pratyakṣa*, argues Dignāga, are based upon *vikalpas* and do not deliver truth except in a very provisional sense of practical usefulness. Whereas besides perception, Hindu philosophers also recognize *anumāna* and *śabda,* the former belonging to the domain of logic in the Western sense, and the latter, i.e., *śabda* on my interpretation, belonging to the field of what is today known as "hermeneutical" or "interpretive" thinking, the Buddhist philosophers only recognize the non-conceptual and non-predicative perception and articulate *nirvāṇa* as an experience of that sort.

Dharmakīrti defines perception as: "*kalpanāpoḍhamabhrāntam,*" a presentation generated only by the objects, not associated with any name or relation (*kalpanā*) and as that which is not illusory (*abhrāntam*).[6] This definition provides the conditions that must be fulfilled in order for anything to become a right perception. A right perception is a perception that is not associated with any names.

A name is given to an object on account of memory, as being the same object that was perceived earlier. Addition of *kalpanā* to the definition excludes everything that is not generated by the object. The senses present the object when they come in contact with it, and these objects must be presented as they are without any conceptual intervention. A perception as presentation should be devoid of all conceptual constructions as well as any error or illusory perception, e.g., of a snake in a rope, that is why not only *kalpanā,* but *abhrāntam* is also included. When devoid of all conceptual constructions and when the senses are free of external or internal physiological causes, perception through the senses presents an object in its uniqueness (*svalakṣaṇa*), i.e., presents elements that belong *only* to it.

Accordingly, for Dharmakīrti, *nirvikalpaka* perception, which consists of only the objects presented to the senses, constitutes true elements presented in perception. *Savikalpaka* perception involves conceptual activity of the mind, because it involves an association between the mind and the objects that were experienced before, revived by memory. These objects thus cannot truly be said to be presented to the senses. In his *Nyāyabindu,* from a *vyavahārika* (empirical-practical) perspective, Dharmakīrti lists three *pramāṇas: pratyakṣa, anumāna,* and *śabda;* however, from a *pāramārthika* point of view, he only accepts *pratyakṣa* (perception) and that also of the *nirvikalpaka* (non-conceptual) type as true in the final analysis.

I have given in the above pages a quick presentation of the so-called anti "rationalistic," skeptical attitude of the Buddhist philosophies, and it is precisely for this reason that it has attracted many Western philosophers. The assumption underlying this belief and expectation is that rational thinking, better yet conceptual thinking, is restricted only to Western philosophy, absent in non-Western thinking, and so non-Western thinking is not a legitimate philosophical enterprise.

II

To disentangle the concepts of "reason" and "experience" from the Buddhist theory of language, concepts, and thinking (they all hang together) is indeed a formidable task. The above epistemological theory, developed with the rise of the schools of Buddhism, gives only one side of the story. They do not provide any information regarding what insights, if any, the Buddha himself had to offer regarding the concepts of "reason" and "experience." In reviewing the Pāli *Nikāyas* and closely studying the Buddha's teachings, his doctrines, his replies to the questions raised by his disciples, and criticisms of the views of his opponents, a different picture emerges. Here we find that the Buddha critiques the traditionalists and *takkīs* (pure reasoners), gives logical reasons why his opponent's position has to be rejected, repeatedly emphasizes the importance of direct personal knowledge, and emphasizes the importance of "knowing" and "seeing" (*jānāti* and *passati*). Thus, in my search for the concepts of "reason" and "experience" in Buddhist philosophies, in this section, I will turn my attention to the Buddha's own teachings. My analysis will primarily be based on the teachings of Gautama Buddha as recorded in the Pāli *Nikāyas*, specifically in *Majjhima Nikāya* and *Aṅguttara Nikāya*.

In "Saṅgārava Sutta," i.e., the "Discourse with Saṅgārava" of *Majjhima Nikāya*, during his conversation with the Buddha, a *brahmin*—an upholder of the Hindu tradition with expertise in the Vedic knowledge—questions the Buddha as follows: "there are some recluses and brahmins, Gotama, who by insight here and now claim to have won the goal and achieved perfection, recognizing the foundations on which the higher life is based. How does the reverend Gotama stand to these?" The Buddha in response states:

"There are differences, in my view, among such. Some of them depend on tradition and claim by tradition to win the goal and the foundations of the higher life—such as the brahmins who know the Three Vedas. Others go on a modicum of belief— such as sophists and researchers. Beyond these are those recluses and brahmins who in domains till then unknown and unaided, discerned a Doctrine and so have insight here and now won the goal and achieved perfection, recognizing the foundations on which the higher life is based. Of these latter am I; or, you may put it, I am of them in so far as they are truly such."[7]

Thus, the Buddha classifies his predecessors in three groups depending upon the specific mode of knowing they emphasize. Jayatilleke[8] and Kalupahana[9] call these three groups "traditionalists," "rationalists," and "experientialists" respectively. Given the loaded connotations of these terms in the Western context and my belief that these terms do not entirely capture the essence of what the Buddha was trying to convey to his disciples, I prefer to call these groups "Vedicists," "Reasoners-Speculators," and, for lack of a better word, "Personal-Experientialists" respectively. My reasons for so classifying them will become clear as I proceed in my investigation. It is worth noting that the Buddha dissociates himself from the first two groups and identifies himself with the third.

"Anussavikās" is the word used for the first group in the Pāli *Nikāyas*. In *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, in his address to Kālāmas and Licchavis, the Buddha rejects ten means of gaining knowledge;[10] six out of these ten are based on some sort of authority and tradition and the remaining four on reason and speculation.[11] These six are: (1) The Vedic tradition (*anussava*), (2) tradition in general (*paramparāya*), (3) report or heresy, (4) scriptures in general (a collection of sacred sayings of a religious group *dicta theologia*), and (5-6) testimony of experts. In reviewing this list of six, we note

that the Buddha distinguishes "*anussavikā*" from "the followers of tradition (*paramparā*) in general on the one hand and the followers of the scripture (*piṭakasampadāya*) on the other. Etymologically, "*anussava*" (*Erinnerung*) is derived from "*anusmṛti*," meaning "remembering"; "*anussarati*" means "recollection"; "*anussara*" means "oral transmission"; and, accordingly, we get "*annussavika*" and "*anussavake*," meaning "traditional" and "speaker" respectively. Monier William's Sanskrit-English Dictionary derives the word thus: *anu* + *śru* = to hear repeatedly from sacred authority; *anu* + *śrava* = Vedic tradition acquired by repeated hearing; and *anu* + *śruta* = handed down by Vedic tradition, that by the time of Patañjali's *Yoga Sūtras* in the sense of Upaniṣadic *śruta* to denote teachings of the Veda, rather "hearing" from any source. In declaring that he was not an "*anussavikā*," the Buddha was not dissociating himself from the traditionalists in general but rather from those who derived their knowledge entirely from the Vedic scriptural tradition and interpretations of it. It is indeed true that during the time of the Buddha, the term "*anussava*" was used in a variety of senses, however, the Buddha, in rejecting "*anussavikās*" had the *brahmins* of the Vedic tradition in mind, because in the passage quoted above from the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, in characterizing the first group he declares that the *brahmins* of the three Veda (*Tevijjā*) belong to this group, and that he is dissociating himself from this group. Notwithstanding the fact that "*anussava*" has been used in the sense of "report," "heresy," and "tradition in general," the Buddha in criticizing the "*anussavikās*" was criticizing the *brahmins* of the Vedic tradition. Therefore, I call the first group "Vedicists."

Let me say a few words about the third group before turning my attention to the second, the group that concerns me the most. The Buddha identifies himself with the third group of *brahmins*, which includes those who "base their

religion on ultimate insight in this life by achieving personal higher knowledge (*sāmaṃyeva. . . abhiññāya*) of a doctrine that is not found among the doctrines handed down from the tradition (*pubbe ananussuteṣu dhammesu*).[12] Many thinkers of the middle and the late Upaniṣads, some of the Ājīvikas, and the Jainas, are classifiable into this group."[13] Thus, the Buddha believed and so informed his disciples that he did not consider himself to possess any unique knowledge that no one else possessed; it is possible for all of us to attain this insight provided we make efforts.

In the *Nikāyas*, the Buddha repeatedly emphasizes the importance of direct personal knowledge. For example, in the discourse known as "*Caṅki Sutta*,"[14] the Buddha, during his conversation with *Bhāradvāja* (a *brahmin*, who claims to have mastered the Vedic scriptures and who claims to know the truth or the falsity of things, stands and falls with the Vedic hymns, etc.) asks as follows: "Tell me, *Bhāradvāja*, is there among all *brahmins* a *brahmin* who claims that he personally *sees and knows* that 'here alone resides truth, and everything else is vain'?"[15] After a series of questions, the Buddha describes *brahmins* as "a string of blind men each holding on to his neighbour, the first of whom cannot see, nor can the one in the middle, nor can the hindermost. Such a string of blind men, methinks, exemplifies the brahmin tradition—wherein the first never saw, nor did the one in the middle see, nor does the last. Tell me, Bhāradvāja; is not the brahmins' belief groundless, on this showing?"

The Buddha further adds that it is not "faith alone which inspires *brahmins* but also the tradition they have inherited."[16] The Buddha argues that neither the *brahmins*, nor their teachers, nor teacher's teachers, including those who composed the Vedic hymns, claimed direct personal knowledge by saying " I know this," "I see this." The Vedic tradition is a blind tradition and the faith/respect (*śraddhā*) of the *brahmins* in these Vedic statements is baseless

(*amūlikā*). The Buddha identifies himself with those experientialists who have direct personal knowledge, ultimate insight. Given the importance the Buddha places on direct personal experience, i.e., on "*knowing and seeing*" and the psychological and philosophical connotations of the word "experientialist" in the Western context, I call the third group "Personal-Experientialists." If we keep the Buddha's characterization of himself as belonging to the third group of *brahmins* with whom he associates, we would get a preliminary handle on our inquiry into the place of reason and experience in the Buddhist teaching. Also, in rejecting the Vedic authority, the Buddha was not recommending that his own words should be accepted on authority, but rather that the truth or falsity of statements from any authority should be personally verified in light of one's own experiences keeping in mind the views of the seers or the wise persons.

With the above in mind, let me now return to the second group of *brahmins*. The Buddha calls the second group "*takkīs/vimāṃsīs*" (lit: reasoner/speculators). My concern with the concepts of "reason" and "experience" leads me to ask the question: who were these *takkīs*? What were the grounds on which *takkīs* were criticized? It is safe to say that *takkīs* were people who used *takka* (Sanskrit: *tarka* or reason), and hence the question: what precisely was meant by *takka*? We already know that *tarka* in the later texts, e.g., *Nyāya Sūtras*, signifies an indirect argument which begins with a counterfactual premise and deduces from it absurd consequences, a kind of *reductio ad absurdum*. The Naiyāyikas refuse to consider it as a *pramāṇa*, because it is dependent on a false premise; however, they recognize its value as an aid to the determination of *vyāpti*, the universal concomitance between the *hetu* and the *sādhya* (which roughly approximate the middle and the major terms respectively of Western syllogism) which has to be proved.

In the Buddhist and the Advaita philosophies however *takka/tarka,* is not used in the Nyāya sense of an indirect *reductio* argument but rather in the general sense of "reason," "logic," "logical argument," etc. Many Western interpreters, following the lead of Oldenberg,[17] regard "*takkīs*" as a group of sophists and skeptics who had no position of their own to defend, but who employed clever arguments to confuse their opponents, and eventually, used *takka* to win debates. Such an interpretation is mistaken; *takka* in Pāli *Nikāyas* signifies reasoning used to construct and defend metaphysical theories. *Takkīs* in fact had their own position, but they defended them only by pure logical arguments without any appeal to tradition or to personal experiences. *Brahmajāla Sutta* mentions sixty-two views (*dṛṣtis*) as products of *takka,* which may be subsumed under the following ten headings:

the world is eternal;
the world is non-eternal;
the world is finite;
the world is infinite;
the soul is identical with the body;
the soul is different from the body;
the *tathāgata* exists after death;
the *tathāgata* does not exist after death;
the *tathāgata* both exists and does not exist after death;
and the *tathāgata* neither exists nor does not exist after death.[18]

Pāli *Nikāyas* reject the above ten because they are based on pure reasoning, and not on direct personal knowledge and experience. *The "Culla-Māluṅkyā (putta) Sutta"* makes it clear in no uncertain terms that reasoning relating to the metaphysical speculations must be rejected because they do not lead to higher religious life, renunciation, enlightenment, *nibbāna.*[19]

"Sandaka Sutta"[20] further clarifies the meaning of *takka* when it notes that religions based on *takka* though unsatisfactory are not false. The Buddha argues that a person's reasoning and speculation may be either good or bad, true or false giving rise to four possibilities: (1) well-reasoned true; (2) well-reasoned but false; 3) badly-reasoned but true, and (4) badly-reasoned and false. The Buddha's argument in the Pāli *Nikāyas* basically consists in maintaining that a position may be well argued and true, well argued and false, ill argued but true, and ill-argued and false, so truth cannot be established by mere reasoning. Accordingly, truth or falsity of a theory in relation to facts cannot be judged by the consistency of its reasoning, because a well-reasoned theory may be false in light of contingent facts and an ill-reasoned theory true. The soundness of reasoning does not and cannot guarantee the truth of the conclusion. However, this should not be construed to mean that the Buddha did not use arguments. In fact, while criticizing his opponents, he often charged them with contradicting themselves. He used logical consistency as a necessary, but not sufficient mark of truth. The four-cornered negation [" I do not say P," " I do not say –P," " I do not say P and –P," " I do not say neither P nor –P,"] attributed first to Sañjaya, the skeptic, and reappearing in much of the Buddhist discourse—was not a rejection of the principle of non-contradiction, but rather a mandate to not violate this principle, and this can be correctly done, as Herzberger shows,[21] by correctly understanding the nature of negation as expressed in the phrase " I do not say that" which is not a truth-functional negation.

Thus, *takka* in the Pali *Nikāyas* is used at least in the following four senses. It may mean:

1) an indirect proof; it is used in the sense in which it is used in the Nyāya school of Indian philosophy;

2) the reasoning used to substantiate one's own position and critique opponents' theories debated in those days;

3) the reasoning used by the Sophists to demolish other persons' views rather than positively advance their own views; and

4) the reasoning used to defend metaphysical theories, a kind of pure *a priori* reasoning (*śuddha takka*), without any appeal to personal experience.

The Buddha rejects the above four senses of *takka*. When the Buddha rejected *takka*, he was, in the language of Śaṃkara, rejecting "*śuṣka tarka*" (dry reasoning), which I will discuss in the chapter on Advaita concept of "reason" of this work.

In light of what I have said so far, it does not seem appropriate to call *takkīs/vimāṃsīs* "rationalists." Additionally, rationalism in the Western philosophical discourse is associated with the mathematical method found in the philosophies of Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz. It has generally been used in opposition to empiricism and construed to be a theory in which the criterion of truth is intellectual and deductive rather than sensory. The Buddha did not reject *takkīs/vimāṃsīs,* because the doctrines they taught followed from the premises logically, but rather because the truths they recommended were not based on empirical verification. The Buddha made it absolutely clear that even if a reasoning is valid and consistent, it may not be true to the given facts. This however, should not be taken to mean that *takka* was valueless; to the contrary, he argued that theories based on *takkas* are not necessarily false, but they are of limited value.

To understand how reason helps in the acquisition of knowledge, let me briefly discuss the theory of meaning, the conception of truth, and the role of logic in the Pāli *Nikāyas*.

With regard to the theory of meaning, the Buddha shows great care in analyzing statements and questions, and the various ways in which they can be understood. He distinguishes between two kinds of doctrines: those of which we could make categorical assertions and those of which no categorical assertion was possible.[22] The Four Noble Truths provide an illustrative example of the former. The latter (of which no categorical assertion was possible) were again of two kinds: those, which after analysis could be decided to be true or false, and, those, which, like the ten "*avyākṛta*" theses (stated above), could not be so decided. This division of statements, (contingent upon their truth-value) into categorical and non-categorical, and the latter into determinable (analyzable) and non-determinable (unanalyzable) is reflected in the division of questions into four kinds:

1. Those, which can be directly answered (*ekāṃsha vyākaraṇīya*), e.g., is fire hot? Yes.
2. Those, which can be conditionally and analytically answered (*vibhajya vyākaraṇīya*), e.g., are men intelligent? Some are, some are not.
3. Those, which require a counter question (*pratipṛchchhāvyākaraṇīya*), e.g., is a human being short? In relation to whom?
4. Those, which cannot be answered (*sthāpanīya*), e.g., metaphysical questions about the reality of such non-empirical matters as souls and God.

For my purposes, it is not necessary to enter into an analysis of the question, why the Buddha took some statements to be analyzable and others as non-analyzable. The point that I am trying to make is as follows: the Buddha was not a dogmatist who made assertions without using reasoning. In fact, the *Nikāyas* abound in explanations: at times, meanings of the terms have been clarified by

classifying them simply into various kinds; at other times, terms are formally defined, however, no single comprehensive definition is given. In general, the analysis of language, meaning, and knowledge in the *Nikāyas* is combined with the empiricist outlook, which gives it its distinctive character.

In the *Nikāyas*, consistency is taken to be a criterion of truth and it is stated that the "truth is one, not two." It is repeatedly pointed out that it is self-contradictory to assert that something exists and does not exist at the same time. The Buddha often rejects his opponents by saying that their theories contradict themselves, because their earlier statements contradict their later statements.[23] It is also worth noting that early Buddhism exhibited a strong pragmatic tendency and often considered the possible effect of a certain doctrine on one's life.[24] In the final analysis, the ultimate benefit is *nirvāṇa*, and the truth leads a person towards it. If something is true it would be useful. However, Jayatilleke denies that there was a pragmatic theory of truth in the *Nikāyas*, because truth is defined in terms of usefulness in the pragmatic theory of truth, which was not the case in Buddhism. He sums up the discussion by noting: "the truths of the Buddhism were considered to be pragmatic in the Buddhist sense of the term...."[25]

Later Buddhists, as is well known, developed the idea of two levels of knowledge: higher and lower. In the Pāli *Nikāyas*, we find a distinction between two kinds of *suttas* (discourses) those having a direct meaning and those with indirect meaning. *Aṅguttara Nikāya* points out that those who confuse between these two kinds of *suttas* end up by misrepresenting the Buddha.[26] Later commentaries transform these two kinds of *suttas* into two kinds of truths. In the *Nikāyas* however, it was believed that the truth is one without a second; this powerful doctrine eventually evolved into the doctrine of two truths.

It is worth noting that in the *Nikāyas* a formal development of logic did not take place, although such logical principles like non-contradiction and the need for consistency were emphasized. It was much later that Dignāga first systematized Buddhist logic and provided an alternative to the already developing logic of the *Nyāya Sūtras*. In summing up this rather rapid survey of the place and the concept of reason in Pāli Buddhism, we can say that inspite of the emphasis on the final knowledge by personal meditative experience, reason, within its constraints, occupied an important place. Nāgārjuna's critique of conceptual thinking, although it developed with the help of logic, nevertheless, paved the way for the development of anti-rationalistic attitude of the later Mahāyāna school discussed at the beginning of this chapter.

Hence, the Buddha was a careful thinker; he used arguments both for his own position and against that of his opponents without appealing to *śabda* or the authority of tradition. When questioned about how to gain right understanding, the Buddha replied that two sources of understanding are testimony of others (*parato ghosa*) and proper reflection (*yoniso manasikāra*). Given that testimony alone could be true or false, any testimony must be verified in light of one's own experience, and thus proper reflection involves both experience and reasoning.

In the original Pāli text, while classifying the second group from which the Buddha dissociates himself, the term "*vimāṃsī*" follows "*takkī*," which leaves no doubt whatsoever that the Buddha was not rejecting reasoners *per se*, but rather reasoners-speculators, or pure reasoners who did not make use of personal experiences to validate their knowledge claims. In fact, in the *Nikāyas*, the Buddha invariably uses "knowing" and "seeing" (*jānāti* and *passati*) together. The Buddha is described as a *jñānin*, that is to say, one who knows and sees *jñānam jānāti paśyam paśyati*. According to

the Buddha, the culminating knowledge arises at the conclusion through a series of causal processes which include *samādhi* (mental concentration), removal of passions, renouncements, removal of the five impediments (*pañcanivaraṇe pahāya*)[27] and the three kinds of knowledge which include remembering past lives, clairvoyance, telepathic knowledge, culminating in the final knowledge which is knowing-seeing the Four Noble Truths. Into the details of the process of each step, I need not enter on this occasion; however, it must be noted that with the removal of impediments, the mind is capable of seeing in an extra-sensory manner things as they are (*yathābhūtajñāna*), i.e., what is existent as existing and what is non-existent as non-existing.

III

To come to grips with the Buddhist concept of "experience," let me recall certain well-known features of his teachings. I will begin with the first sermon embodying the Four Noble Truths. Gopinath Kaviraj has shown that the discourse on the Four Noble Truths follows the structure of the discourse on medicine and curing of a disease.[28] The apt metaphor shows that the basic mode of Buddhist thinking was scientific given that the most developed science for the ancient Indians at that time was associated with the *Caraka Saṃhitā*. The Buddha showed the path by following which people afflicted with existential suffering could free themselves. The Buddha's teachings may be stated as follows: "follow the path laid down by the Buddha and you will get the results you seek." The truth of his teaching can be *experimentally* verified. This shows a clear sense in which he considered himself to be a personal-experientialist.

Let me also recall another important feature of his discourses. It consists in bringing to the forefront the universal validity of the causal principle, "when conditions

are present together, then certain consequences follow." This is the principle of *pratītyasamutpāda.* Etymologically, "*samutpāda*" means "arising in combination" better yet "co-arising." However, when compounded with the term "*pratītya*" meaning, "moving" or "leaning," the term signifies "dependence." Accordingly, the term "*pratītyasamutpāda*" has generally been translated as "dependent arising." In the Buddhist texts, the formula of dependent arising has often been expressed as follows: "When *this* is, *that* comes to be; on the arising of *this, that* arises. When *this* is not, *that* is not; on the cessation of *that, this* ceases."[29] Essentially a doctrine of causality, it encompasses within its fold a set of such interrelated notions as, moral responsibility, freedom, nature of psychophysical personality, sense experience, craving, rebirth, death, and so on. The Buddha explains this doctrine in the *Discourse to Kātyāyana* in the context of explaining the Doctrine of the Middle Way in which he advises Kātyāyana to avoid both extremes of existence and non-existence and asks him follow the Middle Way. In his words:

On ignorance depends *karma*;
On *karma* depends consciousness;
On consciousness depend name and form;
On name and form depend the six organs of sense;
On the six organs of sense depends contact;
On contact depends sensation;
On sensation depends desire;
On desire depends attachment;
On attachment depends existence;
On existence depends birth;
On birth depend old age and death, sorrow, lamentation, misery, grief, and despair. Thus does this entire aggregation of misery arise.

But on the complete fading out and cessation of ignorance ceases *karma*;

On the cessation of *karma* ceases consciousness. . .
On the cessation of existence ceases birth;
On the cessation of birth cease old age and death, sorrow, lamentation, misery, grief, and despair. Thus does this entire aggregation of misery cease.[30]

The Buddha uses the doctrine of dependent arising to explain the nature of human existence and predicament. It is used to explain not only the process of human bondage but also that of freedom. The beginning statement "on ignorance depends *karma*" provides an explanation of human bondage. The "name and form" refers to psychophysical personality, the human person in bondage, whose nature is conditioned by his/her consciousness (*vijñāna*), which, in turn, is conditioned by his ignorance or lack of understanding. Conditioned by ignorance and dispositions, a person experiences the empirical world surrounding him through the sense organs, becomes attached to them, craves for them, thereby creating a desire in him to be born again and again.

It is worth noticing that on the basis of an unadulterated sensuous empiricism, like that in the West of David Hume, such a principle could not be justified. In that case, one could at most say, given A, B is likely to follow. The Buddha, however, taught that when all the causal conditions are present, the effect arises. This particular version of the principle of causality is important for our purposes. We need to examine what is the nature of this theory, and what are the ramifications of relying so heavily on the validity of such a principle.

Clearly, on the Buddhist view, this principle was not the result of an inductive generalization, nor was it justified by the Naiyāyika's *tarka* (counterfactual *reductio* argument). Recall that the Naiyāyikas did not use *tarka* to justify the general principle of causality that every event has a cause,

but rather to justify such specific causal laws as "fire causes warmth." So, how could the Buddhist arrive at the principle of *pratītyasamutpāda*? If empirical generalization in the sense of induction yields only probable rules, and, if *tarka* can be applied only to specific laws, (e.g., if fire were not the cause of warmth, then to produce warmth you could bring in ice, which is absurd), then the Buddha must have derived it from some "intuition" of a general law, for which the Buddhist epistemologies did not make any provisions. Here is a good example of a concept, often used in a theory, but not reflected upon regarding its origin and validity. To use a distinction popularized by Eugene Fink, such concepts are operative concepts; the system operates with them, but never thematizes them. The Buddhists were so much under the grip of this notion that they never reflected upon its source and the method by which it was arrived at. If the Buddhists derived this causal law from the "Buddha *vacana*" (the words of the Buddha) then they would have to admit *śabda pramāṇa*, which they do not, because knowledge based on the reports of others may be either true or false. The question still remains: what is the source of this causal law? It for sure is not *śabda,* may be, it is gotten from some experience of a general truth. The Buddha, as is wellknown, did not want his disciples to take his words to be the final justification; he encouraged them to verify what he said by their own individual experiences, which is implied in his famous advice to Ānanda on his death bed: "Be a light unto thyself" (*ātmānam pradīpo bhava*). The above remarks lead to the unavoidable conclusion that there was a concept of experience operative.

The Buddha uses "seeing" in the *Nikāyas* for what we generally understand by "experience." "Knowing-seeing," the expression that the Buddha uses quite often, takes place at every level of experience, whether with regard to sensory perception of mundane things or supernormal remembering of one's past lives or seeing of the Four Noble Truths. At

every level, the thing, as it really is, is manifested to a person, but we must keep in mind that in no case "knowing-seeing": entails an identity of subject and object. The thing known is always different from the person who knows it. One knows and one sees the thing in its true nature. The Buddha's words then seem to suggest that the knowledge of a thing, better yet, the apprehension of the truth of a thing, is always "knowing-seeing," and the fact that the Buddha repeatedly warns us not to take a pure logical argument as adequate for determining the truth and does not regard *śabda* by itself to lead to that goal, would make it obvious that for him "knowing-seeing" was always perceptual. With regard to empirical matters, seeing is only ordinary sense perception, and I should add, only of the *nirvikalpaka* variety, which the later Buddhists, Dignāga and Dharmakīrti privileged, and justifiably so. With regard to non-empirical truths, "knowing-seeing" is perceptual, not sensory.

One may ask: What does the Buddha's final knowledge, i.e., "knowing-seeing" of the highest level signify? Additionally, if at the final stage of this knowledge we are told that one sees the Four Noble Truths, one would want to know whether the "knowing-seeing" of the truth of *dukkha*, of *dukkha samudāya*, of *dukkha nirodha*, and *mārga*, is knowing of these truths propositionally? Alternatively, is it non-conceptual apprehension of the thing itself in each case? It certainly cannot be a knowing *that* something is the case, which would be propositional, *de dicto*. It must be, in order to be truth giving, a seeing or vision of the thing itself, which is conceptually represented in the proposition. But how can we make sense of the idea of non-propositional seeing of the sequence involved in dependent origination, or, of the possibility of *nirvāṇa* or *nirodha satya*, if not as an actual seeing of an attainment of *nirvāṇa*? The same also concerns the thought of "knowing-seeing" of the *mārgas*, the Noble Eightfold Path. The question that I am raising

concerns the seeing at some moment, *now,* of a whole succession or series (*pravāha*) without inserting that *now* into that series. Is it possible to apprehend in one moment, or in one finite series of moments, an entire beginningless succession of events occurring in the phenomenal world? Although this might seem impossible, I would say that there is a way only if we correctly understand the nature of our apprehension of temporal succession.

It is possible to argue, as it has indeed been argued by many philosophers, we always apprehend at any *now,* all three dimensions of time in one: the past—which is but the present—just gone, the present (now), and the future which is just about to come, so that our experience of time, limited though it is, is always of past, present, and future together. This indeed is what I have learned from Husserl's lectures on time-consciousness.[31] Using this account, I can imagine a mind, purified of all passions and interests, having the ability to apprehend *together in one moment* the entire succession of events almost in a manner which is analogous to the understanding of divine knowledge as *totum simul,* i.e., a simultaneous awareness of the entire series. For such a mind, the entire time-series is presented at once (as is the number series conceived of by the mathematicians), and this could very well be described as seeing of the Four Noble Truths.

At this point, I will venture a suggestion, drawing upon three sources, which might appear daring:

1) A concept which might be of value and provide insights is not found in Buddhist epistemologies, but in the Nyāya system, although during the Buddha's time, Nyāya had not yet been fully systematized. This is the concept of *sāmānya lakṣaṇa pratyāsatti*: in perceiving a particular, one's sense organs are in contact not only with the particular qualities or the substance, but also with the uni-

versal inherent in them and through the latter contact one also perceives, in a manner, all particulars under that universal. Thus, perceiving a cow as a cow, one also *perceives* all instances of the universal cowness (*gotva*);

2) The Jainas of very ancient times defined perception (as knowledge which is clear and detailed "*viśadaṃ pratyaksaṃ*") and classified perception into sensuous and non-sensuous; and

3) we may also recall the Buddha's alleged descriptions of the direct perceptual experiences he had of the major truths of his teachings during the night preceding his final *nirvāṇa*.[32]

These three point to the possibility that the ultimate justification of *pratītya* was perception of a general truth based upon perception of particular instances, which was neither deductive nor inductive but something like what contemporary Western phenomenologists call "*eidetic intuition*," i.e., intuition of *eidos* (universals, e.g., cowness, redness, etc.).[33] However, the Buddhist epistemologies, as they developed from Dignāga onward, had no room for such a conception in view of their explicit and extreme nominalism.

I have focused upon *pratītya* because, in this particular doctrine, which no Buddhist school has denied or could deny, the Buddhist epistemologies confront the limits of their official doctrine and we encounter most of their difficult questions regarding whether the Buddhist philosophy is antirational or purely empiricist. If the above account is correct, then it points to the possibility that the Buddha's experientialist attitude was based upon general truths like "bring about A, then B will follow," which presuppose a concept of experience and also a concept of rational procedure which reject the opposition between reason and experience that is conventionally set up in Western epistemology.

Endnotes

1. S. Anacker, *Seven Works of Vasubandhu* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1984).
2. Thomas Kochumuttom, *A Buddhist Doctrine of Experience: A New Translation and Interpretation of the Works of Vasubandhu the Yogācārin* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1982).
3. "*Ākāra*" refers to the specific arrangement of the parts of a thing (*avayava-vinyāsa*). In this sense, the external objects are said to have an *ākāra*, because they have a shape and a form. The issue whether consciousness is formless (*nirākāra*) or has a form (*sākāra*) is enormously complicated. For our purposes, it is suffice to note that the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika and the Mīmāṃsā, the realist schools of Indian philosophy, who argue for the existence of external objects, deny any form to consciousness, since consciousness, being a quality, has no parts. The Yogācāra Buddhists, on the other hand, oppose the realist conception, and given that they deny external objects, argue that the form wrongly ascribed to the object *qua* external reality belongs to consciousness itself, i.e., to the *vijñāna*. But notice that in the case of the Yogācāra Buddhists, the concept of "*ākāra*" has undergone change. It is not any longer arrangement of parts (the Yogācāra *vijñāna* has no parts), but is to be understood as the intentional content.
4. The Sanskrit equivalent of his description found in the Tibetan manuscript may be formulated as follows: *pratyakṣam kalpanāpoḍham nāmajātyādyasamyutam* (*Pramāṇa-Samuccayam*, Chapter I).

   Uddyotakara in his *Nyāyavārttika* makes use of the first line and subjects Dignāga's description to a devastating attack. "*tatro 'rthādvijñānamtī pratyakṣam*," *NV*, 1.1.4. This is, I agree, what the Buddhists ought to say, and once he says this then all components of linguistic expressions and concepts cannot belong to perception.
5. Patañjali notes: "*śabdajānānupātī vastuśūnyyo vikalpaḥ*," i.e., *vikalpa* follows a verbal knowledge (*śabda*) and is empty of a thing." In other words, *vikalpa* has no material substratum. *Vikalpic* knowledge depends for its production on words *alone* and the presence of an external object is not needed. Nothing existing in reality corresponds to *vikalpa*. *Yogasūtras*, I.9

6. "*Tatra kalpanāpoḍhamabhrāntam pratyakṣam,*" *Nyāyabindu* (Banaras: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series, 1954), Chapter I, p. 8.
7. *Majjhima Nikāya*, Lord Chalmers (tr.), *Further Dialogues of the Buddha* (London: Oxford University Press, 1927), vols. 5 & 6, 2.211, pp. 121–122. Henceforth, this edition of *Majjhima Nikāyas* will be cited as *MN*.
8. K. N. Jayatilleke, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge* (New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1983) p. 170. Hereafter, this book will be cited as *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*.
9. David Kalupahana, *Buddhist Philosophy: A Historical Analysis* (Hawaii: University Press of Hawaii, 1974), Chapter 2.
10. (a) *Anussavena*, (2) *paramparā*, (3) *itīkirāya*, (4) *piṭakasampadāya*, (5-6) *bhavyarūpatayā* and *samaṇo no guru*. See *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, Woodward, F. L. (tr.), *The Book of the Gradual Sayings* (London: Luzac & Company, Ltd., 1960), vol. I, pp. 170–175. Hereafter this edition will be cited as *AN*.
11. The four based on reason are: *takka hetu, naya hetu, ākāra parivitakkena*, and *diṭṭhi nijjhāna kkhantiyā*. See *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*, "Attitude to Reason," pp. 205–276.
12. *MN*, 2.211.
13. Ibid.
14. "*Caṅki Sutta*," *MN*, II. 164-177, p. 96.
15. Ibid., p. 96.
16. Ibid., p. 97.
17. Hermann von Oldenberg speaks of a variety of Indian sophists ("*eine Art indischer Sophistik*") in the section entitled "SOPHISTICK" in his work entitled *Buddha, Sein Leben, Seine Lehre, Seine Gemeinde* (Stuttgart und Berlin: J. G. Cotta'sche Buchandlung Nachfolger, 1923), p. 80.
18. *Dīgha-Nikāya*, Rhys Davids (tr.), *Dialogues of the Buddha* (New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2007), Vol. I, pp. 186–87. Henceforth this edition will be cited as *DN*.
19. *MN*, 1.426ff.
20. *MN*, 1.513–524.
21. Hans Herzberger, "Double Negation in the Buddhist Logic," *The Journal of Indian Philosophy*, vol. 3, 1975, pp. 3–16.

22. *DN*, I.191, Vol. I, pp. 256–57.
23. *MN*, I. 292.
24. Ibid., I.429 & 134.
25. Jayatilleke, p. 358.
26. *AN*, I.70, pp. 65–71.
27. Five impediments are: (1) passion,(2) ill-will, (3) sloth and torpor, (4) excitement and perplexity, and (5) doubt. *DN*, I.71-75, Vol. I, pp. 83–86.
28. See Gopinath Kaviraj's "Introduction" in Acārya Narendra Dev's *Bauddha Dharma Darśana* in Hindi (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1994).
29. *MN*, I. 262–64, pp. 187–188.
30. *Saṃyutta-Nikāya*, xxii.90. Henry Clark Warren, *Buddhism in Translation* (New York: Atheneum, 1963), p. 166. Henceforth this book will be cited as Warren.
31. E. Husserl, *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time (1893-1917)*, J.B. Brough (tr.) (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1991), XLV-XLVI.
32. See various early accounts in Vasubandhu's *Abhidhamma Kośa*.
33. For a discussion of Husserl's "*eidetic* intuition," see the last part of the *Ideas* I entitled "Reason and Actuality" *(Vernunft und Wirklichkeit)* & *Experience and Judgment* (trans.) Churchill and Ameriks (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1986).

Chapter Three

Reason and Experience in Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika

I

The syncretist Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika system shared a common ontology first developed by the Vaiśeṣikas and an epistemology developed in detail by the Naiyāyikas, both the old and the new. In my search for the concepts of "reason" and "experience" in this system, I will primarily focus on their theory of the *pramāṇas*, which are both the causes of true cognition (*pramā karaṇam*) and the means of justification of cognitions. As a causal theory, the theory of *pramāṇas* is subsumed under its ontology, for the theory explains how a certain *guṇa* or property called "cognition" arises or is generated, in a certain entity called "self." As a theory of justification, however, the *pramāṇa* theory, which provides norms for justification for all cognitions, also provides justification for its ontological theory. Thus, from one perspective, epistemology comes under ontology, from another ontology is subject to the norms of epistemology. In order to determine the place of "reason" and "experience" in Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, I will begin with the Nyāya *pramāṇa* theory and conclude with a brief review of the Nyāya ontology (*padārthas*) in the hope that it would provide further insights into the role of reason in this school.

Since the Nyāya system is primarily a theory of *pramāṇas* and *pramāṇas* justify our beliefs about things in the world, it is natural to expect that some part of its theories would contribute to a theory of reason. However, whatever it may have in promise for us, let me note at the outset that the *pramāṇa* theory is not a theory of pure[1] reason. There is no *a priori* knowledge according to the Nyāya system, although there are beliefs which are inherited from past lives and traces left by them.

In reviewing the four *pramāṇas,* at the first sight, there is a temptation to take "perception" as "experience" and "*anumāna*" as "reason," leaving out *śabda* and *upamāna* for the present. The idea of perception seems close to the idea of experience inasmuch as the Naiyāyikas define perception as cognition, which arises from contact between a sense organ and its object.[2] However, when we try to understand this definition, we begin to see that the definition applies only to perceptions which are "*janya,*" i.e., "produced"; that is to say, which arise and pass away. If there is a cognition that deserves to be called "perception," but which does not arise, but is always there, then the definition would not apply to it. Is there any such cognition? Certainly, all human cognitions are generated. However, for the Naiyāyikas, the idea of perception is not co-extensive with the idea of human perception. If there is a being, who is an eternal being and perceives all things at all times, then the definition would not apply to this being's perception. The Naiyāyikas were aware of this difficulty, because one cannot rule out such a being simply by defining perception to suit one's own interest. Gaṅgeśa defines perception in a more general sense to include both human and divine perceptions as a cognition that is not caused by another cognition. This definition applies to God's perception inasmuch as it is not caused, as well as to human perception insofar as it is not caused by any prior knowledge but by sense object contact.

Shall we then say that only human perception is *experience* because it does arise from the functioning of the sense organs? One must be cautious in arriving at a conclusion about this question, and before answering it, one must have a clear conception of what the Naiyāyikas mean by "*contact*" and identify what sort of things one is able to perceive on their theory. On the Naiyāyika's account, contact is the function of a sense organ through which it enters into specific relations with its appropriate object and brings about perception of that object. This contact between the sense organs and their objects may be of various kinds.

The Naiyāyikas, starting with Uddyotakara, give a detailed account of contacts. To be specific: they recognize six kinds of ordinary contacts.[3]

For our purposes it is not necessary to go into a detailed analysis of these contacts, suffice it to note that on the Naiyāyika account we perceive the following kinds of entities: we perceive a substance of gross dimensions, e.g., a physical object; qualities inhering in such a substance, e.g., color, smell, and other sensory qualities; the universals which are instantiated in those substances as well as their qualities, relations between entities that we perceive; and we perceive not only things present but also the absences of things if the counter-positive of such an absence is itself perceptible. Let me give an example to illustrate the Nyāya position in this regard: if there is a pitcher in front of me completely visible, then I perceive that pitcher; I perceive its color, its smoothness or hard surface as the case may be, the universals present, e.g., pitcherness, redness, smoothness, hardness, the relation between a universal and the particulars in which it is instantiated, between color and the substance through *samavāya* (inherence), the absence of the blue color in the red pitcher, and given suitable conditions I also perceive that the pitcher is not a tumbler (i.e., the difference between the two). In addition,

if I see parts of a broken pitcher, I perceive that there was a pitcher, which no longer exists; or, if I see a potter putting together the parts of a pitcher to make it a whole, I perceive that a pitcher would come into existence. All these show that the concept of "perception" is quite expansive and it goes far beyond the narrow Western empirical accounts of it which set up an opposition between the merely given and what reason contributes to cognition. It is worth mentioning here that whereas on the traditional Western theory of reason that goes back to ancient Greeks, the object of perception is a particular and the object of reason is a universal (*eidos*), the Naiyāyika perception however includes both; the sense organ of vision apprehends both the particular color red and universal redness, the particular pitcher and the universal pitcherness. It is worth noting that with the exception of the empiricists who trace all relations back to principles of association and reflection (introspection) most philosophers in the Western tradition hold that sensory perception apprehends particular objects, while the relations between the objects is determined by reason. Not so on the Naiyāyika account; on their account they argue that if the objects are perceptible, then the relation between them is also perceptible.

The story does not end here; the Naiyāyikas go further and include under perception both *laukika* (ordinary) and *alaukika* (extraordinary) perceptions. To explain this distinction, I will, once again, turn to the idea-notion of "contact" between a sense organ and its object. Leaving aside the six ordinary contacts mentioned earlier, the Naiyāyikas recognize three kinds of extraordinary contacts which may obtain between a sense organ and its object thereby generating a perceptual cognition. There are occasions, when a prior cognition, contrary to what was said earlier in connection with Gaṅgeśa's definition, may

itself function as a means of contact or of establishing a contact between a sense organ and object—an object that is not its normal object. It is because of this kind of contact "*jñānalakṣaṇā pratyāsatti*" that sometimes we *visually see* that a block of ice is cold or a piece of velvet cloth is soft and smooth. The second kind of extraordinary [contact] occurs when, on perceiving a cow in the ordinary manner, I also perceive the cowness inherent in her and through perceiving cowness my visual sense organ comes in contact with all instances of that universal, but only insofar as they instantiate that universal but not with regard to their individual differences. This type of contact is known as *sāmānyalakṣaṇa pratyakṣa*. Thus, the Naiyāyikas develop a theory that when appropriate conditions are present, we can come to perceive a universal law such as wherever there is smoke, there is fire, and accordingly, hold that the problems associated with the empiricist problem of inductive knowledge (*à-là*-Hume) do not arise in their system. These two kinds of extraordinary contacts clearly demonstrate that our perceptual knowledge goes far beyond the narrow confines of an atomistic psychology and the hypothesis known as the "constancy hypothesis." While ordinarily we see color and not fragrance with the eyes, our perception of the world goes far beyond this simple co-relation, as phenomenologists, e.g., Merleau-Ponty,[4] have emphasized in recent times. In addition, our perception of the world contains apprehensions of many empirical co-relations which are not simply probable laws. For example, a sense organ has the capacity to receive a specific stimulation, e.g., eye of color, tongue of taste, touch with the tactile sense organ, etc., and yet quite often these sense organs may function together, and one may see a color as cold or as warm.

Finally, the contact between sense organs and their objects also goes beyond the limits of their normal operation, e.g., spatio-temporal limits. Persons may develop extraordinary abilities with *yogic* practices to perceive things that are too small to be perceived, e.g., atoms or things that are very far in space and time. This is called *yogaja* perception brought about by the *yogic* practices. If we take *laukika* and *alaukika* together, then it would seem that everything that there is, is perceptible. The Navya-Nyāya does not make much of this thesis although it emphasizes a broader thesis to the effect that everything that exists is knowable. Thus, on their overall theory, everything that is knowable is also perceptible.

Before turning my attention to *anumāna,* let me say a few words about the distinction between direct, immediate or non-conceptual knowledge and mediate or conceptual knowledge, which one finds in the Nyāya epistemology. Although Nyāya regards both as knowledge, therefore as *anubhava,* we might suggest that only the immediate knowledge is experience, not mediate or conceptual knowledge. I am here referring to the distinction between *niṣprakāraka* and *saprakāraka* knowledge. Some cognitions do not have any qualifier; they directly apprehend their objects. This happens in *niṣprakāraka* perception when the sense organs first come into contact with their respective objects, these objects are perceived non-conceptually, and in the Nyāya language, cognitions concerned do not have any *prakāra.* Such perceptions are also non-relational in the sense that two things are not perceived as related in a certain way. The perception only takes in a bunch of different objects together and not as related. When I perceive a picture, I also perceive pictureness, color of the picture, etc., but not these three entities are related in a certain way. Thus, non-conceptual perception may be described as an experience in a stricter sense, because in such perceptions

entities are experienced precisely as they are and not as qualified by other entities. These cognitions do not have any relational content; they only have a bunch of pure objects.

Thus, Nyāya has a concept of "immediate, direct, non-conceptual" *anubhava*, which conforms to the English usage of "experience," but this experience, though always available, is soon covered up by conceptual *anubhava* and thus would seem to be of little use, except to lend support to the Nyāya realism. Therefore, the sort of knowledge that is available to us, knowledge which can be of use in everyday lives, is not non-conceptual perception, but rather, conceptual knowledge. In short, what we have amounts to as follows: Nyāya use of *anubhava* as coextensive with *pramājñāna* seems to be too wide if one continues to have the other usage in mind, namely, *anubhava* as experience. However, in order to restrict too wide usage, we may restrict the use of experience to only non-conceptual perception.

Let us return to inference. Is *anumāna* a function of reason? Whatever else it might be, the word "*anumāna*" etymologically implies that it is a kind of cognition, which follows a prior knowledge, which in most cases is perceptual. The inference, which the Naiyāyikas discuss, is not the kind of inference that completely dispenses with its basis in perception; generally, it moves from what is perceived to what is not perceived now, but is perceivable. If perception is Western philosophy's experience (which I doubt), and to the extent it is, inference is still "experiential" and does not completely transcend the bounds of experience. However, on the Nyāya theory we perceive universals as well, an ability, which was assigned to reason in the classical Western thought. Thus, *pratyakṣa* includes "rational insight."

Before proceeding further, let me quickly recall a familiar structure of *anumāna* in order to ascertain what cognitive function and abilities make it possible and what are some of its ramifications. This theory has two aspects: under one aspect the theory gives a psychological account of how the process goes on; it is called "*svārthānumāna*" or inference for oneself. A person sees smoke on a distant hill, upon seeing it his mind goes back to what he had learnt before, viz., that smoke is always accompanied by fire. With this revived memory, he sees the same smoke on the hill but now in a new light, he sees it as "pervaded by fire." This seeing leads to the arising of his inferential cognition that there is fire on that hill. Clearly, the process is not a logical structure; it gives a story of a causal chain of how one cognition causes another whose final member is the inferential cognition. However, in the second aspect of the theory, for the purposes of convincing the other (*parārthānumāna*), one can transform the story into a logical structure, somewhat like a syllogism with the well-known five-membered structure, represented as follows:

1) The hill has fire (*pratijñā*, proposition to be proved)
2) Because it has smoke (*hetu*, provides the reason that establishes the proposition)
3) Whatever has smoke has fire, e.g., kitchen (*udāharaṇa*, universal concomitance with an example)
4) The hill has smoke which is invariably associated with fire (*upanaya*, i.e., application of the universal concomitance to the present case, and
5) Therefore, the hill has fire (*nigamana*).

Certain features of the above Nyāya account of inference are worth noting.

It clearly shows that in the theory psychological process of inferring and the logical structure of inference are related. The essential point to be remembered in this context is that

the causal process is amenable to a logical exposition such that the logical and the psychological seem to be perfectly adapted to each other. In Western logical theories, particularly during the last century, psychologism in logic has been severely criticized by such thinkers as Frege and Husserl. The Nyāya logicians, however, never had any anxiety about so closely adapting the psychological to the logical. In the words of J. N. Mohanty: they might have psychologized logic, but did so by logicizing psychology.[5] The idea that pure logic gives an ideal structure of rationality raised above a temporal process of one's mental life never showed up among the concerns of the Indians. The psychological process itself is also logical, only it has to be cast into a form that is suited for intersubjective (*parārtha*) communication.

Vātsyāyana in his commentary on *Nyāya Sūtras*[6] recognizes that all the *pramāṇas* ultimately rest on perception: Inference is that knowledge which is preceded by perception (*tatpūrvakaṁ*)[7]; *upamāna* is based on the perception of similarities between two objects; and *śabda* depends on perception insofar as it involves visual or auditory perception of written or spoken words. Let us pursue a little further Vātsyāyana's claim that perception is the most basic of all the pramāṇas and its implications for inference.

In the above inference, i.e., in the familiar case of inferring the presence of fire from the perception of smoke on a hill, the inferential process presupposes that one has already perceived the smoke on the hill, that one has previously perceived the co-presence of smoke and fire, and has never perceived the presence of smoke without fire. All inference, therefore, at bottom seems to be empirical, substantiating Vātsyāyana's claim, and it would be reasonable to conclude that there is no pure rational activity of inference in Nyāya. However, this conclusion must be understood, or even modified, in light of various other facts about the Nyāya logic.

First, if inference is knowledge that comes after some other knowledge by definition, it is not necessary that this prior knowledge must be generated by perception, it may even be the knowledge that is generated by words alone (*śabda*). Thus, a cognition generated from the *śrutis* may also serve as the basis for inference. However, such knowledge-cognitions from *śrutis* may also involve prior sensory perception, for example, hearing an utterance. Thus, it seems that some form of rootedness in sensory perception is almost unavoidable for the Naiyāyikas.

However, it would be quite another thing to ask whether, according to Nyāya epistemology, sensory perception alone constitutes experience. Perception, of course, is defined in the system as cognition that arises from the contact of the sense organs with their objects. Although the system tries to conceive of the sensory contact between the sense organ and its appropriate object on the empiricist model of impingement, such a contact, however, is not simply an impingement of sensory stimuli on the sensory receptors on the model of Western empiricism; it goes beyond that empiricist picture. For perceptual cognition, the system also requires two additional contacts: the contact of the soul with the mind (*manas*) and the contact of the mind with the sense organs. The latter contact, though it may be brought under the concept of "attention" in Western psychology, cannot simply be called "empirical"; additionally, still difficult is the concept of "contact" between the soul and the mind. Both these contacts defy a complete empiricist reduction.

It is indeed true that the eyes are in contact only with the color in the literal sense, but there is a contact of the eyes or the visual sense organs, for example, not only with the colored object that I see and with its color, but also with the universal present in the thing and the universal present in the color. Accordingly, I not only see a white

cow, but I also see the cowness in the cow and the whiteness in the white color. It is in this sense that to perceive one cow as a cow is to see all other cows as well. Although the sensory perception of a white cow as a cow and as white is still described with the idea of contact, the actual description of the contact exceeds the model of impingement with which the empiricist operates. Such complicated relations—which make it possible that universals are perceived—are very far from being what empiricists have in mind when they think of sensory input.

For our present purposes of determining the place of reason in Nyāya, it is important to note that the ability generally ascribed to reason, as opposed to the senses, is the ability to intuit universals. This is the classical Platonic doctrine according to which reason intuits a universal whereas the senses always intuit a particular-- an opposition that breaks down in Nyāya. The sense organs, we are told, perceive universals under certain appropriate conditions. Shall we then say that the Nyāya position is still an unmitigated empiricism?

In this context, one must not lose sight of the fact that the notion of sensory contact goes far beyond perceiving the universals. In the cases of extraordinary perceptions (*alaukika pratkyaṣa*) objects which are not appropriate objects of one sense organ may be perceived by another sense organ through a process of transference. Thus, for example, one may visually perceive that a lump of snow is cold. It is worth noting that on the Nyāya account, we do not infer that the lump of snow before me is cold, but rather we see visually that this lump of snow is cold. The Naiyāyikas do not stop here. This extension of the domain of sensory perception goes still further; they hold that when I see a lump of snow, I also perceive snowness present in it, and this sensory contact with the universal also enables us to see all other lumps of snow in which the same universal is present. Thus the kind of seeing that occurs is not simply thinking, nor imagining, but rather a sort of perceptual cognition of all other individuals in whom the same universal is present.

It is this last kind of perceptual cognition of all individuals coming under a class, which makes induction possible. It seems as though, in a purely empiricist epistemology, a solution to the problem of induction is in principle possible only if the perception of the particular already implies perception of the universals present in that particular which, in principle, makes it possible to apprehend a universal relationship, say, between fire and smoke. Thus, we see that the Nyāya theory of sensory perception is not empiricist in the strictly Humean sense. It is not introducing a faculty of knowing called "reason," it is also not taking "experience" as a faculty. Moreover, as we have seen, the Naiyāyikas ascribe some of the functions of reason to the sense organs, which, in traditional Western philosophy, have been regarded as sources of pure empirical knowledge.

The close correspondence between the psychological and the logical also bears evidence to the underlying theory about the relation, though never made quite explicit, between the empirical and the rational. The empirical shows structures which are rational in the sense of being logical, without needing the imposition of any structure from the outside. The logical has no other source, no pure understanding or reason in the Kantian sense; there is indeed no pure logic in the Husserlian sense whose domain consists of such ideal meanings as propositions. The Nyāya syllogism is "impure," as contrasted with the logic of Frege or Husserl. There are no pure logical entities in this theory, no propositions detached from the flow of one's mental life.[8] We are thus led to the Nyāya theory of meaning of words and sentences, which I will discuss next.

Śabda pramāṇa, i.e., "words as a source of true knowledge," may be either *laukika* or *alaukika*. *Śabda pramāṇa*, when it is *laukika śabda*, i.e., word as it is used in ordinary discourse, yields knowledge about the world which can

otherwise be known by other *pramāṇas*, e.g., perception and inference. However, the unique position of *śabda pramāṇa* in Hindu thought derives from the fact that it is a source of knowledge about things, which we cannot know otherwise. *Śabda* is to be recognized as a *pramāṇa* only if it is irreducible to any other *pramāṇa*, and its irreducibility is needed to support our cognition of moral rules as well as of such supersensible realities as after-life and *adṛṣṭa*. As is well known, all the Vedic systems (except the Vaiśeṣika) accept *śabda* as a *pramāṇa*. Vaiśeṣika do not question its validity; they only question its irreducibility.

This is the place where Indian logic could have yielded a theory of understanding as distinguished from knowing, the former concerned only with meanings and their relationships and the latter with their verification in experience. This is the place where Indian thinking, much like Western thinking, could have yielded the distinction between the logical and the analytical truths on the one hand and the empirical and the synthetic truths on the other, and possibly, some sort of Kantian synthetic *a priori*. Indian thought did not follow this route. The Naiyāyikas avoided this route by making their theory of meaning purely referential. The word "cow" means an actual individual cow, but only as qualified by the generic feature of all cows. Therefore, in all other cases, a sentence, which is a combination of words subject to proper syntactic and semantic rules, also means not an ideal proposition but a complex entity composed of entities designated by the component words. This referential theory of meaning, reminiscent of Russell's,[9] has its many well-known problems, e.g., the problem of empty names that do not designate any real thing. The Nyāya solution of the problem more precisely anticipates the pattern, which later became well known in the West by Russell's theory of descriptions. On this account of Nyāya and Russell, such an expression as "hare's horn"

is to be rephrased into another form in which the component words, "hare" and "horns" appear but not as a name consisting of the two, i.e., "hare" and "horn." Such a sentence as "hare's horns do not exist " is rephrased into the sentence "a hare has no horns." My concern in this brief exposition is not the logical theory itself, but a substantiation in this context, from a different angle, of the Indian concepts of "reason" and "experience," which, as stated earlier, are not completely separate but are rather closely welded into an indivisible unity. Before proceeding further, let me quickly note that no other Indian theory seems to make a distinction between meaning and reference. As opposed to the Nyāya, the Mīmāṃsā took the word "cow" to mean not individual cows but the universal cowness. At first sight, this theory which, under certain versions, raises meanings to the status of eternal entities (*sphoṭa*), does bear some resemblance to the ideal entities of some Western philosophers of logic.[10] One must, however, be cautious in this context and not confuse it up with the *sphoṭa* theory of the Grammarian Bhartṛhari that comes closer to the Frege-Husserl theory of meaning. The Mīmāṃsā theory which identifies meanings with the universals instantiated in the particulars, and so with a feature of the real world rather than the denizens of another. Some, like Mark Siderits,[11] have suggested that if one is searching for a theory of *Sinn* as distinguished from reference, then one should look at some version of the Buddhist theory of *apoha* which denies the idea of reference altogether and takes meanings of words to consist in a complex system of differences. The best way to express this complex theory is by noting that the word "cow" means not an individual cow, not the cowness of the cow, but a series of such differences as not-a-horse, better yet, not-non-cow. Here the Buddhist logic, as it developed from Dignāga onwards, exhibits features, which— though never coinciding with Western thinking about logic—brings

the Buddhist logic in the vicinity of Western logic, though always maintaining its distinct originality, because the theory of *apoha* does not quite separate the logical from the real. When this theory came to be developed, the ontology of purely instantaneous particulars was also being developed, such that the logic and the ontology were struggling to adapt to each other as closely as possible. The point to keep in mind is as follows: we still do not encounter the picture of the logical as separated from the real.

The crucial questions in each of these cases may be formulated as follows: Does the knowledge that is achieved in judgmental, predicative knowledge or even in inference go beyond the sensory input? Alternately, does the knowing mind (even if the concept "knowing mind" is difficult to apply here) contribute something out of its own resources? In inference, for example, when one sees a column of smoke rising from the distant hill, remembers the generalization, already acquired, that "wherever there is smoke, there is fire," remembering having seen their co-presence in one's own kitchen, recognizes that the present perceived smoke comes under the generalization, and then draws the conclusion that there is fire on that hill. In this sequence of cognitive events, one needs to ask how much, or which steps, are causally necessitated by the preceding sensory inputs, or is there a step where cognition goes beyond the data and their causal chain? In reviewing these steps, we see that in the generalization that whenever there is smoke there is fire, there is a new achievement of the cognitive process that goes beyond the data and anticipates possible future experiences. Another cognitive step, which possibly cannot be construed as a mere causal sequence, is the application (*nigamana*) of that generalization to the present case. The point I am trying to make is as follows: *it is at these interstices that the pure empiricist's understanding of cognition is exceeded.*

What we have learned from the foregoing discussion is that in Indian thought the logical and the real, which under one description would be the rational and the empirical respectively, do not constitute two different worlds, but are blended together in such a manner that the logical only gives us the semblance of a separated structure while in reality it arises out of the real. There is no rationality outside of the empirical, and also no empirical that does not exhibit a logical structure.

Śabda, as the kind of knowledge that arises from the verbal utterances of a competent speaker in which the auditory perception of an utterance and understanding its meaning through an imaginative presentation of the objects—irrespective of whether intended or meant—certainly falls within the realm of an empiricist theory. However, the following question arises: can linguistic understanding or an understanding of the meaning of a complex sentence (not merely of words treated as names) and trust in the intellectual and moral competence of the speaker—which, again, far exceeds any sensory input—be explained purely empirically without any residue? It is indeed true that consistently with its empiricism, the Nyāya, has a purely referential theory of meaning in which words are treated as names, and understanding the meaning amounts to recalling what a word names. A sentence would then name a complex object consisting of relations such as qualifier and the qualificand but one is forced to recognize that understanding these logical constituents involves more than what they name, and seems to force the theory to recognize entities, or constituents of entities, which are purely epistemic and not real constituents of outer objects. Some authors, for example, Matilal[12] and Mukhopadhyaya,[13] assign these epistemic entities to an outer circle outside the narrower inner circle of entities of Nyāya ontology.

The Naiyāyikas and the Mīmāṃsakas take *śabda* to be a unique source of our knowledge of moral rules (*dharma*), which cannot otherwise be known. A large part of the *śrutis* consists of imperatives which recommend what we should or should not do. Here, as in logic, we seem to encounter a duplication of the world, the sensible and the supersensible, the sensible consisting of facts which can be ascertained by all the *pramāṇas* and the supersensible consisting of the *dharmas* which can ascertained only by or through the *śrutis*. A Kantian could argue that here we find a distinction between the empirical and the rational, with the exception that the *dharmas* belong to the domain of practical reason. Now, let me point out, in consonance with what I had said earlier, that even here the separation between the meanings of descriptive sentences and the meanings of imperatives is not as radical as on the Kantian distinction between the "is" and the "ought." It would perhaps be sufficient for my purposes to point out that there is no Kantian "ought" in Hindu moral philosophy. The imperatives in this context designate courses of action that be followed, better yet, should be done, if one wishes to achieve specific goals. Grammatically, the verbs in *vidhi*-sentences are in the form of "*vidhiliṅg*," which means "should" rather than "ought." Should one want to go to heaven, to recall a certain group of well-known imperatives, then one should perform such and such sacrifices. On this interpretation, there is no deontological interpretation of the moral rules and nothing like a Kantian claim that the moral rules are given by "reason." The imperatives are sentences enjoined by the texts which promise desirable consequences and whose authoritativeness is established by philosophers with careful argumentations. Within the overall scope of this understanding, there are, of course, differences of opinion regarding whether one should do one's duties in order to enjoy the consequences promised,

or whether one should still continue to do his duties irrespective of the consequences. Therefore, the world of morals is not a separate world besides or above the world of facts, but the two interpenetrate each other in complicated ways. Those who follow *dharma* incur merits, and those who violate *dharma* incur demerits, which, in turn, not only influence their future lives but also knead them together into a social whole which, at the same time, is a part of the real world. If it is rational to abide by *dharma*, then that rationality only means that they serve the best interest of the agent as well as of the community as a whole.

If the above argument is correct, then it only shows that, like the logical and the mathematical knowledge, in morals as well, i.e., in the domain of *dharmas*, we are still dealing with the empirical world, with another aspect of it, and the *dharmas*, like other actions, are motivated by interests, except that these interests are now higher than the interests which motivate *adharmas*. If an action is a rational action, then it is still the result of human choice upon which the moral rules in the *śrutis* exercise their authority. There are not two wills, the empirical and the pure, but only one will. Choosing a life of *dharma* over *adharma*, the same will functions both as a psychological power motivated by a higher interest and making a moral choice. Irrespective of whether the will is *sāttvika* or *rājasika* or *tāmasika*; it is still natural; it is still a part of nature. In other words, the point I am trying to make is as follows: very much like the logical in Indian thought, *the moral is also a part of the natural process, leaving no room for elevating the rational above the empirical or demoting the empirical below the rational in dignity.*

We thus find that trying to carry through what might seem to be a realistic and an empiricist project, the Nyāya is forced to court two strategies: at times, it expands the concept of "experience" by expanding the idea of sensory

contact beyond the limits of empiricism, and, at other times, it rejects the possibility of pure thinking not reducible to sensing or imagining. This only shows that even though there is no separate cognitive faculty of thinking, thinking is admitted and one silently makes use of it at the crucial moments. There is certainly no concept of "reason," just as so also, there is no concept of pure "experience" either. However, any cognition, which is the culminating achievement of a cognitive process ending with the apprehension of an object through an appropriate cognitive means, is called experience or "*anubhava*."

The steps that lead to *anubhava*, however, are not always a direct, unmediated experience of an object, but rather involve intersubjective processes of verbal communication, understanding, and inference, not to speak of such subordinate and subsidiary processes as disputation, refutation, and use of sophistical arguments (*vāda*, *jalpa*, and *vitaṇḍā*). These intersubjective activities are removed from the empiricist picture and are closer to rationalist thinking, but that is the precise reason which explains why a concept of "reason" as a faculty is not required. The process of acquisition of knowledge is a complicated process. The Nyāya stays close to sensory input as much as possible, but does bring in the role of *vicāra* even if it does not elevate it to the status of a *pramāṇa*.

Now I turn very briefly to the fourth *pramāṇa*, i.e., *upamāna*, in which the cognizer, on the basis of a resemblance between a present object and an earlier description, arrives at the judgment "this is like that." The Naiyāyika refusal to take this as a case of simple perception or even as mere inference shows the correct appreciation that resemblance is not a sensory datum by itself, but rather involves a comparison between "this" and "that," an activity which is at the heart of more advanced conceptualizations.

II

Nyāya *Padārthas*

Before concluding this chapter, I will give a quick account of the Nyāya *padārthas* in the hope that this discussion will provide further insights into the nature of reason in Nyāya. Gautama in his *NS* 1.1.1 lists sixteen *padārthas*.[14] A clear understanding of these is necessary for a full comprehension of the Nyāya concept of "reason," given that Nyāya as the science of *ānvīkṣikī* discusses all of these *padārthas*. Additionally, it must be kept in mind that *ānvīkṣikī* as a science is different from the other three disciplines, viz., *trayī*, *vārtā*, and *daṇḍanīti*.[15] Of the sixteen, the *pramāṇa* and the *prameya* have already been discussed. Of the remaining fourteen, I will discuss *tarka* last.

Saṃśaya or doubt represents a state of uncertainty.[16] In doubt, the mind wavers between mutually contradictory descriptions of the same thing, each of which is possible. There is knowledge of a thing in general terms (*sāmānyataḥ*), but no apprehension of its specific nature; however, some of the specific possibilities are remembered resulting in a doubt of the form "*sthāṇurayaṃpuruṣo vā*," i.e., "is this a man or a tree?" There are many different ways in which the nature and the conditions under which doubts occur are discussed in the Nyāya literature; all of them involve different alternatives but no discernment of any specific mark to decide between them. Wherever there are conflicting opinions of philosophers such that the two contradictory possibilities are there, there is doubt. The controversies between the Buddhists and the Mīmāṃsakas have given rise to a well-known case of doubt—not a perceptual but an intellectual doubt—which, in Indian literature has been expressed as follows: "*śabdonitya anityo vā*," i.e., "Is sound eternal or non-eternal?" Here two specific properties, "eternity" and "non-eternity," are mutually

contradictory and not merely contrary. Gautama also lays down two additional conditions of *saṃśaya* which are: absence of a determinate order of experience (*upalabdhi*), that is to say *avyavasthā* of *upalabdhi*, and absence of a lawfulness of *anupalabdhi* (non-perception). Sometimes we experience a thing, say, water, where there is no water, e.g., in a desert. At other times, we may perceive a thing that is not there giving rise to a doubt assuming the form "Is this water or not water?" "Is this knowledge true or not?" One may misperceive or fail to perceive what is there.

It must be clear that settlement or resolution of doubt by *nyāya* is a rational activity. Doubt precedes the exercise of *nyāya*, that is to say, of the different means of knowing in order to ascertain the nature of a thing and remove doubt. It is arguable that doubt and the effort to remove doubt are rational activities, although, as has been argued by Mohanty,[17] the *nyāya saṃśaya* is perceptual doubt, while Cartesian doubt is intellectual. However, the resolution of doubt itself is a rational activity even if it involves seeing the thing more clearly and discriminatingly.

Prayojana[18] or purpose or an end-in-view is that object which we have determined as deserving to be reached or to be shunned in order to stimulate the discussion of *nyāya*. There is some goal, which, we think, should be reached or shunned, and this determination or purpose leads to the application of *nyāya*. The primary purpose of all rational activity is the attainment of happiness and the removal of *duḥkha*; however, everything that leads to the realization of the primary purpose can also function as a secondary or subsidiary purpose.

Dṛṣṭānta or example illustrates a general rule.[19] It is that entity with regard to which there is agreement between both parties, i.e., between ordinary persons and critical thinkers. In other words, the ordinary persons (*laukikāḥ*) and the critical thinkers (*parīkṣakāḥ*) using logic must agree

with regard to something and it is only such an agreed entity that can be used as an example. In other words, when one argues that there must be fire in the hill because it has smoke, the kitchen may be cited as an example of that in which one sees smoke accompanied by fire. Example thus is a very important and necessary part of the Nyāya reasoning; it is a component of the Nyāya five–membered syllogism.

Siddhānta or conclusive view is the doctrine which belongs to or whose locus is *śāstra* or a discipline or a science.[20] Conclusion is the definite ascertainment of an entity. In the next aphorism,[21] Gautama divides it into four kinds:

1) *sarvatantra siddhānta*, that which is not disputed by any of the sciences;
2) *pratitantra siddhānta*, that which is established by a particular discipline and by particular philosophers;
3) *adhikaraṇa siddhānta*, where in order to establish the property of a given thing we have to first establish another property of it. For example, the Naiyāyikas argue for the omniscience of creator by first establishing that an agent initially makes a binary combination of atoms possible.
4) *abhyupagama siddhānta* is provisional acceptance of a conclusion of others. For example, when the opponent, in this case the Mīmāṃsaka, establishes that sound is a substance, the Naiyāyikas respond as follows: "we are not going to challenge this thesis; however, let us discuss the issue taking the thesis—either sound is eternal or non-eternal—for granted." The hope is that the idea of substantiality of sound will eventually be refuted if both alternatives (eternal or non-eternal) are set aside. Such a provisional acceptance of a conclusion of the other is called "*abhyupagama siddhānta*," which

clearly has the structure of a hypothetical argument of the form "if S then either p or not-p." But if both alternatives p and not-p, are shown not to apply, then the hypothesized premise must be wrong.

Avayava means "member" or "premises." A syllogism consists of five members or premises. These members have been discussed above.

Nirṇaya is the ascertainment of the truth attained by *pramāṇas* and *tarka*.[22] It is the result of *vimarśa* or the removal of all doubt, which usually precedes it, and takes into account all views for or against a particular doctrine.

Vāda stands for analytic consideration that goes on for the purpose of the ascertainment of truth.[23] It, like *nirṇaya*, also proceeds with the help of *pramāṇas* and *tarka* and uses arguments which are stated formally in the form of five-member syllogism. The goal is not to refute any established theory; rather in *vāda*, each of the parties involved in discussion—the proponent and the opponent—attempt to establish his own position and refute the position of the other, where the goal of both the parties is to arrive at the truth.

Jalpa is wrangling in which both parties involved aim to defeat each other, but make no honest attempt to ascertain the truth.[24] Given that the goal is to defeat others, it involves use of invalid arguments and reasons. Lawyers usually use such arguments.

Vitaṇḍā is a kind of debate in which the proponent does not aim to establish his own position, but aims simply to refute the position of the others.[25] Thus, whereas in *jalpa* each party's goal is to establish his respective position and to gain victory over the other by refuting his position, in *vitaṇḍā*, each party tries to win by simply refuting the position of the other; it comes close to sophistry.

Hetvābhāsa[26] does not mean a defective *hetu*, but rather a "seeming" or "pseudo" *hetu*, so that the recognition of a *hetvābhāsa* prevents the inference from taking place.

In ***chala*** one of the parties to a dispute after failing to give a good argument against his opponent may advance many irrelevant or pseudo replies.[27] Here an attempt is made to contradict the argument of another person, by giving an unfair reply. The respondent contradicts a statement by taking it in a sense other than the intended one. In other words, when a person, say X, cannot meet the fairly strong argument provided by, say Y, then X may contradict Y's statement by taking it in a sense other than the intended sense. For example, X may say "the boy is *nava-kambala*" meaning that the boy possesses a new blanket, and Y unfairly objects and points out that the boy is not "*nava-kambala*," meaning that boy does not possess nine blankets.

Jāti stands for all those futile arguments advanced by one party against the other, which, instead of destroying the opponent's position, really contradicts the position of the one who advances those arguments.[28] In other words, *jāti* affects the structure of the internal consistency of the party that advances such arguments. For example, in trying to meet the argument "sound, being an effect, is non-eternal, like a jar," the opponent may argue, "sound shares with sky the property of being *amūrta*, and so is eternal like sky." This is *jāti*. The Naiyāyikas enumerate twenty-four kinds of *jātis*.

Nigrahasthāna[29] is the last entity in Gautama's list, in which "*nigraha*" means "defeat" and "*sthāna*" means "place" so that it leads to the final defeat of the proponent or the opponent. It includes many different kinds of arguments leading to the final defeat of one of the parties. Gautama in the second chapter of the fifth part of the *Nyāya Sūtra* lists twenty-two such arguments, which lead to a final defeat.

This list of entities (it must be clear that these are entities in a highly abstract sense) shows what really occurs between the parties of a dispute, beginning with doubt and ending with ascertainment of truth, defeat of one of the parties and the victory of the other. Such an argumentative tradition, since ancient times, was a part of the rational discourses of the Indian philosophers, and much of the work of Nyāya was to give them precise definitions and formulations. It must also be evident that the concept of reason implicit in these discussions makes reason inseparable from proper, precise, and goal oriented use of the language and from intersubjective discourse.

III

Tarka

When the truth of a theory has not been determined and the subject matter is doubtful, *tarka* removes the doubt and therefore gives the confidence that the *pramāṇas* can be applied to this subject matter.[30] In this sense, *tarka* itself is not a *pramāṇa*, but it is an aid to *pramāṇa*. It shows by a counter-factual argument that if things were of such and such nature, then absurd consequences would follow. For example, with regard to the eternity or non-eternity of the self, *tarka* removes the doubt by arguing, "if the self had an origin and an end, then *karma* and its consequences would not take place, which is not acceptable."

It is perhaps in the kind of reasoning known as "*tarka*" that the cognitive process achieves a clearly noticeable freedom from the constraints of sensory input. *Tarka* in the *Nyāya Sūtras* is used as a kind of hypothetical argument, an indirect way of justifying a conclusion, which demonstrates that the presumed hypothesis to prove the conclusion leads to absurdity. *Tarka* is an intellectual cognition produced by desire (*icchājanya*), known as *āhāryajñāna*, of the following

form: "If smoke could exist in a locus which does not have fire, then smoke could not be caused by fire." The question is asked whether any absurdity would result if the given conclusion is accepted as true or rejected as false. This kind of argument would remove any doubt in the *vyāpti*, "wherever there is smoke, there is fire," and, as a result, strengthens the inference that proves the presence of fire on the ground of the presence of smoke. However, since the presumed hypothesis in the *tarka* is a counterfactual argument and false, the resulting cognition cannot be taken to be a *pramā*. Let me give an illustrative example of this sort of reasoning: in looking through the bay window of my house, I see a huge column of smoke coming out of the house across the street and say that the house across the street has caught fire. A friend sitting next to me argues that there is no fire, only smoke; in response, I advance a *tarka*: "if there could be smoke without there being fire, then one could produce smoke without producing fire, which is absurd." This proposition is deduced from the hypothesis because it follows from the hypothesis as a general rule: "whatever has a mark, has that which it is a mark of." To put it differently, the absence of fire is a mark of the absence of smoke. Accordingly, the modern Naiyāyikas define *tarka* as a process of deducing from a mark that of which it is a mark. It is important to remember in this context that *tarka* does not give rise to true knowledge, i.e., it is not a *pramāṇa*, because one of its premises, the assumption of the contradictory of the conclusion is false. It confirms a *pramāṇa*; it is an aid to *pramāṇa*. This process of indirect proof in the Nyāya roughly corresponds to *reductio ad absurdum*, which one finds in Western logic.

In *tarka*, reasoning is free from the constraint of sensory input and sets up a premise which is contrary to fact. The reasoning from counterfactual conditionals is perhaps the one instance in which reasoning achieves independence from the given data. However, interestingly enough,

precisely for that reason, the Nyāya, regards *tarka* as a mere case of imagination and having no truth-giving status. However, it cannot be denied that in *tarka* the knowing mind frees itself from the given data and constructs a premise about what is merely possible. The Nyāya empiricist stance comes out more clearly nowhere than in its refusal to treat *tarka* as a *pramāṇa*.

Endnotes

1. By "impure" I mean an admixture of the logical with the psychological and the empirical; "pure," then would mean removing all traces of the psychological and the empirical from logic.
2. Gautama, *Nyāya Sūtras* (*NS*), 1.1.4. Gaṅgeśa defines perception as: *"jñānākaraṇakaṃ jñānaṁ pratyakṣaṁ" Tattvacintāmaṇi "Pratyakṣakhaṇḍa,"* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1974), Vol. I.
3. These are:
    1. *Saṁyoga* (conjunction): a direct contact of the eyes with the object, say, a book on the table in full sight;
    2. *Saṁyukta samavāya* (inherence in what is conjoined): an indirect contact of sense with its object through mediation of a third term that is related to both, e.g., when my eyes come in contact with the color of the book through the book in full sight;
    3. *Saṁyukta samaveta samavāya* (inherence in what is inseparably related to what is conjoined): a still more indirect contact with the mediation of two terms that are related, e.g., in perceiving a book on the table, I also perceive "colorness" which inheres in the color of the book, there is a contact of the eyes with the "colorness" with the mediation of the two terms "book" and "color," i.e., conjunction with the book and the second kind of contact with the color;
    4. *Samavāya* (inherence): When I hear a sound, the sound inheres in the ear (according to the Vaiśeṣika ontology), so the sense organ of hearing is in contact with the sound in relation of *samavāya*;

5. *Samaveta samavāya* (the relation of inherence in that which inheres in the sense): the contact between the sense and its object *via* a third term that is inseparably related to both, e.g., in the auditory perception of soundness, the ear is in contact with the "soundness" because it inheres in the sound which, in turn, inheres as a quality in the ear; and
6. *Saṁyukta viśeṣaṇatā*: here the sense is in contact with the object insofar as the object is a qualification of the other term connected with the sense. This happens when I see the absence of a jar on the floor. The Naiyāyikas explain the perception of non-existence and the relation of inherence with the help of this kind of contact. When I see the absence of an elephant on the floor of my room, the visual sense organ has a conjunction with the floor, but the absence is in the relation of *viśeṣaṇatā* with the floor. See Uddyotakara's, *Vārttika* on *Nyāyabhāṣya* on *N.S.*, 1.1.2.

4. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, translated by Colin Smith (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962), of P, chapter 1.

5. J. N. Mohanty, "Nature of Indian Philosophy: Theory of *Pramāṇas*," in *Explorations in Philosophy*, edited by Bina Gupta (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 10–11.

6. Gautama, *Nyāya Sūtras* (*NS*), 1.1.3.

7. *NS*, 1.1.5.

8. J. N. Mohanty, *Gaṅgeśa's Theory of Truth* (Santiniketan: Center of Advanced Study in Philosophy, 1966); (Second edition, Motilal Banarsidass, 1989). See Mohanty's introduction for a discussion of the question: are cognitive events or *jñānas* of Indian epistemology propositions?

9. Russell's theory of meaning is worked out in his writings, most notably in *An Inquiry into Meaning and Truth* (New York: Norton, 1940).

10. For example, "meanings" for Husserl are "ideal entities." See *Logical Investigations*, part I.

11. Mark Siderits, 'The Sense-Reference Distinction in Indian Philosophy of Language,' *Synthese* 69 (1986) pp. 81–106.

12. B. K. Matilal, *Perception* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986).

13. Pradyot Mukhopadhyaya, *Indian Realism: A Rigorous Descriptive Metaphysics* (Calcutta: K. P. Bagchi & Co., 1984).

14. The Vaiśeṣika list of *padārthas* however is different from Gautama's list.

15. *Trayī* is the science of the Vedas; *vārtā* is the science of agriculture and animal husbandry, while *daṇḍanīti* is the science of punishment and by implication of political government.

16. Gautama in his *Nyāya Sūtra* (*NS*) 1.1.23 defines *saṁśaya* as follows: *"samānāneka dharmopapatte vipratipatte rūpalabdhyanupalabdhi-avyavasthātaśca viśeṣāpekṣo vimarśaḥ samśayaḥ."*

17. See J. N. Mohanty's "Nyāya Theory of Doubt" *Phenomenology and Ontology* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1970).

18. *NS* 1.1.24 defines *prayojana* as follows: *"yamarthamadhikṛtya pravartate tatprayojanam."*

19. Ibid., 1.1.25 defines *dṛṣṭānta* as: *"laukikaparīkṣakāṇāṃ yasminnarthe buddhisāmyaṃ sa dṛṣṭāntaḥ."*

20. Ibid., 1.1.26 defines *siddhāntaḥ* as follows: *"tantrādhikaraṇābhyupagama-saṃsthitiḥ siddhāntaḥ"*

21. *"sa caturbidhaḥ sarvatantra pratitantrādhikaraṇābhyupa gamasaṃsthityarthāntarabhāvāt."* Ibid., 1.1.27.

22. Ibid., 1.1.41 defines *nirṇayaḥ* as follows: *"vimṛśya pakṣa-pratipakṣābhyāmarthāvadhāraṇaṃ nirṇayaḥ."*

23. Ibid., 1.2.1 defines *vāda* as: *"pramāṇatarka sādhanopalambhaḥ siddhāntāviruddhaḥ pañcāvayavopapannaḥ, pakṣapratipakṣa-parigraho vādaḥ."*

24. *Jalpa* is defined as *"yathoktopapannachhala-jāti-nigrahasthāna-sādhanopo-lambho jalpaḥ."* Ibid., 1.2.2.

25. *Vitaṇḍā* is defined as: *"sa pratipakṣasthāpanāhīno vitaṇḍā."* *NS*, 1.2.3.

26. Ibid., 1.2.5.

27. Ibid., 1.2.10 defines *chala* as: *"vacanavighāto'rtha vikalpopapattyā chalam."*

28. Ibid., 1.2.18 defines *jāti* as: *"sādharmya-vaidharmyābhyāṃ pratyavasthānaṃ jātiḥ."*

29. Ibid., 1.2.19 defines *nigrahasthāna* as: "*vipratipattirapratipattiśca nigrahasthānam.*"

30. Ibid., 1.1.40 defines *tarka* as follows: "*avijñātatattve arthe kāraṇopapattitastattvajñārthaṃ ūhastarah.*"

Chapter Four

Reason in Advaita Vedānta

Advaita Vedānta, the non-dualistic Vedānta "founded" by Śaṃkara, asserts the identity (rather, non-difference) of empirical selves and the one universal, ever-present consciousness, called "*brahman.*" It is the only reality that there is, one only without a second; it is non-dual. It is the source of whatever could appear in consciousness, a single undifferentiated whole. Śaṃkara uses the criterion of *bādha* to arrive at his ontological hierarchy consisting of three levels: *pāramārthika,* the level of reality; *vyāvahārika*, the level of appearance; and *prātibhāsika*, the level of illusory objects. Reality is non-dual; it does not have any distinctions within it. Real is that which cannot be sublated by any other experience. Appearance is the practical-empirical level: the world of names and forms, empirical objects and beings governed by the laws of causation, belong to it. It is sublated only by the direct knowledge of the *brahman.* Illusions, hallucinations, dreams, etc., belong to the illusory level. Illusory objects can be sublated by all other types of experiences. Thus, anything that can be in principle negated has a lesser degree of reality than that which replaces it. Given this, to say that the experience of reality itself cannot be sublated by anything amounts to saying that the experience of reality cannot be denied or disvalued by anything else.

Śaṃkara's entire philosophy can be summed up in the following statement: *Brahma satyaṃ, jagan mithyā, jīvo brahmaiva nāparaḥ*, i.e., the *brahman* [alone] is real, the world is false, the empirical self is not other than the *brahman*. Both the finite self and the empirical world are "false" (in a well-known technical sense of being "indescribable" either as *sat* or *asat*). The *brahman* alone is real; it only appears to be many. This appearance is due to a "beginningless" cosmic ignorance which, though not a real power of the *brahman*, nevertheless resides in it. Thus, the *brahman* is the locus of ignorance. The *brahman* is not only the locus of ignorance, it is also the object of ignorance. The *brahman* manifests that ignorance, which at the same time conceals its true nature.

The question arises: How can a finite, imperfect, limited being realize an identity with the *brahman*, a state in which all subject/object distinction is obliterated? Since *brahman*'s non-duality is inconsistent with the plurality of empirical existence, what is the status of this plurality? Thus, it is incumbent upon the non-dualists (Advaitins) to explain how reality and appearance become interrelated and, therefore, confused. From an ontological point of view, from the level of reality, this movement, this process, this journey never did and never could occur. Nevertheless, the appearance of the movement, at least to those, to whom the movement seems real, is a fact. These two levels, from the point of reason and experience, are incommensurable. Reason cannot establish any connection with them. Hence, the question: what role, if any, "reason" plays in this journey toward the *brahman* which, strictly speaking, cannot be thought about, better yet described, because all thoughts and descriptions in the final analysis are inherently limiting?

With the above in mind, let us proceed to determine what, if any, is the equivalent of "reason" in Advaita Vedānta. Scholars in their discussions of "reason" in the context of Advaita Vedānta, similar to what they do when they discuss, e.g., Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, Mīmāṃsā, etc., use such

concepts as "*anumāna*," "*vicāra*," "*manana*," "*tarka*," "*yukti*," and "*nyāya*," translate "*śrutis*" (the heard texts) as "revelation,"[1] and contrast revelation with reason. For example, John Tabor, while discussing the role of reason and its relation to scripture, points out: "Śaṅkara does not make a technical distinction in this [*BSBh* 1.1.2] discussion between *tarka* and *anumāna* in the Naiyāyika sense. He employs *tarka* generally to include *anumāna*. I shall, accordingly, render the term *tarka* variously as 'logic,' 'logical argument,' 'reason,' etc., *anumāna* more specifically as 'inference'."[2] In a similar vein, K. N. Upadhyaya argues that "*tarka*" or "*yukti*" in Śaṅkara's writings translate into "reason."[3] As stated earlier, such terms as "*tarka*," "*yukti*," "*anumāna*," etc., designate a kind of thinking, and accordingly, may be said to be modes of reasoning. Linguistically, it is a mistake to translate "*yukti*," "*manana*," "*vicāra*," as "reason" of Western epistemology and metaphysics. Advaita position is supported by "reason"; however, on my interpretation, reason does not simply mean logical argumentation, or dialectical refutation, but a much larger set of procedures including hermeneutics of texts, phenomenological description, and transcendental argument as in *arthāpatti* along with inference as sources of knowledge.

The discussion in this section will revolve around the following questions:

1. Is *manas* the faculty of reason in Advaita Vedānta? Is it *buddhi*? Or, both?
2. What constitutes justifying beliefs by reasoning? What constitutes rational thinking?
3. What is *tarka*? What are its limits? Is reasoning the same as *anumāna* of the Indian logic? Is rational thinking the same as *manana* or *vicāra*?
4. Is *śruti* revelation? Is reasoning ever intuitive in the Vedāntic tradition?[4]

I will begin with the first question.

1. *Manas* and *Buddhi* in Advaita Vedānta: The Sanskrit word "*manas*" is usually translated into English "mind." Common to almost all systems of Indian philosophy is the belief that the *manas* is essentially material in which the quality of *sattva* predominates. However there are important differences between the "*manas*" and the Western understanding of the "mind." Consciousness, in Western context, is a characteristic of the mind; Indian philosophers, on the other hand, take consciousness to be either a property of or identical with the *ātman* (self).

Among Indian philosophers, *manas* is used in different senses. One can distinguish among different conceptions of *manas*:

(i) According to Nyāya, Mīmāṃsā (both Prābhākara and Bhāṭṭa), and Sāṃkhya, *manas* is the inner sense of perception. It is through *manas* that we directly perceive internal objects, e.g., cognitions, pleasure and pain, etc. *Manas* is also involved in the perception of external objects, but it cannot directly, by itself, perceive them; it rather connects the knowing agent and the outer sense organs in their production of knowledge. Nyāya and Mīmāṃsā hold that *manas* is an instrument of atomic size, partless, and eternal. Sāṃkhya, unlike Nyāya, argues that *manas* is neither external nor atomic; it is all pervading and non-eternal. *Manas* is an evolute of the *ahaṃkāra* (the I-sense), which, in turn, is an evolute of *prakṛti* (nature), from which the entire physical world evolves. Thus, it is a non-spiritual substance of medium extension, and is different from *puruṣa* or self, pure consciousness.

(ii) *Yoga-Vāśiṣṭha*, Sākta Āgama, and Pratyabhijñā Śaiva traditions hold that self is pure consciousness, but in its freedom assumes the form of *manas*. Thus, *manas* is a form of consciousness.

(iii) According to most schools of Advaita Vedānta *manas* is not a sense organ; it is not indivisible, infinitesimal substance, as is the case with Nyāya and Mīmāṃsā. It is insentient in nature, and as in Sāṃkhya-Yoga, it is of medium dimension, plastic or pliable in nature so that it takes on modifications according to various objects. *Manas* is an inner sense (*antaḥkaraṇa*) of perception; it is transparent due to the predominance of the *sattva* quality so that pure consciousness or *ātman* can be reflected in it. Of these two views, the Advaita view, the view that concerns me here, is more complicated, which I will expound further.

Manas in Advaita Vedānta is one of the functions of the inner sense. The Advaitins hold that the inner sense is located within the body, and is divided into three parts, so to speak. One part remains inside the body, the second part makes contact with the external objects, and the third part resides between these two making the whole a unit. The interior part is called the "ego-sense," the intervening part performs the cognitive action, and the part in contact with empirical objects makes them manifest as objects of a cognitive act. Cognition of an object is not possible in the absence of the consciousness that underlies it. But consciousness by itself cannot associate itself with objects of cognition. Instrumentality of the inner sense is required to establish its connection with any object.

The transparency of the inner sense allows pure consciousness to be reflected in it and according to the three parts of the inner sense, it is manifested in three different ways: as the cognizer, the cognitive operation, and the cognition.

Although the consciousness that is manifested is one, the inner sense, which is the medium of manifestation, has different parts. Consequently, there is threefold designation: The part of consciousness as limited by the (inner sense's) aspect of agency

is (called) the knower. The part of consciousness as limited by the (inner sense's) aspect of operation is (called) the means of knowing. The part of consciousness as limited by the (inner sense's) ability to manifest the object, is (called) the true cognition. The possible object of true cognition is nothing but the brahman-consciousness residing in the object in a state of unknownness. The same, when known, becomes the fruit of cognition.[5]

On account of these different activities within the inner sense, one self appears as many. It is by means of the modes of these activities that the veil that had been covering an object is removed, resulting in the cognition of the object. The ignorance that constitutes the inner sense encompasses within itself the activities of the intellect (*buddhi*) and the mind (*manas*).

Śaṃkara states that *manas* is one of the four functions of the inner sense:[6] the inner sense which is a limiting adjunct of the self is also variously called as: *manas* (mind), *buddhi* (intellect), *vijñāna* (cognition), and *citta* (retro-cognition or memory). Mental modifications account for these functional variations: it is called *manas* when it assumes a modification in the form of doubting; *buddhi* when the modification assumes the form of certainty, etc.[7]

Dharmarājādhvarīndra (17th century) in his *Vedānta Paribhāṣā* reiterates the same point when he argues:

Mental modes are of four kinds: doubt, certitude, egoism, and retro-cognition. Considering this division of the mental modes, the internal organ [inner sense], although one, receives different appellations, namely, mind (*manas*), intellect (*buddhi*), ego-sense (*ahaṁkāra*), and retro-cognition (*citta*) [memory].

[Accordingly], it has been said:

the internal instruments are *manas, buddhi, ahaṁkāra,* and *citta,* and the [their] contents [functions] respectively are: doubt, certitude, egoism, and memory.[8]

These four functions, the Advaitins, argue are involved in any and every external perception. When I see an object, say, a tree, initially I am aware of it as something (deliberation), recall my past impressions (memory), and identify it as a tree (certainty) which gives rise to the knowledge that "I know that this object is a tree" (egoism). These modifications of the inner sense, caused by the forms of the external objects arising with the senses, account for perception. Accordingly, the activity of *manas* is confined to sense perception. *Manas* thus is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for the production of knowledge.

It is with *buddhi* possibly that we identify a higher cognitive activity, higher than the *manas*.[9] In his commentary on the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad,* which takes *buddhi* to be superior to the *manas,*[10] Śaṃkara points out that *buddhi* is "more subtle" than the *manas*.[11] He reiterates the same point in his commentary on the *Bhagavad Gītā,* which states that "similarly, higher is the *buddhi* which is determination or resolution."[12] *Buddhi* is the faculty by which one forms concepts and moral judgments and strives after the knowledge of the supersensible realities; in fact, *buddhi* forms both empirical and non-empirical concepts. Thus, it appears that the *buddhi* of Advaita Vedānta includes both the Kantian understanding and speculative reason. Taken in this sense, *buddhi* is more comprehensive; it is an appropriate designation for reason as a faculty. Thus, of all the different aspects of the inner sense, the Advaita Vedānta takes *manas* to be lower than the *buddhi,* and along with Sāṃkhya and Yoga[13] holds that consciousness reflected in *buddhi* is the agent and the knower (*jñātā/kartā*). *Buddhi* makes judgments, evaluates every object as favorable or unfavorable.

2. Rational Thinking *vis-à-vis Pramāṇas:* What is called giving reasons for a belief, or justifying one's beliefs by reason is an activity that is more comprehensive than simply justifying beliefs by an inference. For Indian

philosophers, perceptual knowledge as a *pramāṇa* presents its own object and justifies the validity of a perceptual belief. Given that the *pramāṇa* theory is not only a theory of the way a true cognition is generated, but also a theory of justification, the Advaitin may justify one's belief by using any or all of the six *pramāṇas* accepted. If I see that that flower is red, and if all the conditions of a true perceptual belief are fulfilled, then the flower is red. Again, one may justify one's belief by inference: inferential knowledge or *anumiti*, is a knowledge that follows perception and justifies the belief, e.g., that there is fire on that mountain by appealing to an already determined relation of *vyāpti* (universal concomitance) between smoke and fire and applying it to the particular case under consideration. Another means of justifying a belief, empirical or non-empirical, is by using the method of *arthāpatti* or postulation. The case of "Devadatta must be eating at night because he does not eat during the day and yet grows fatter" involves postulation in support of an empirical belief. *Arthāpatti* can be applied to lead us from a given experienced datum to another experienceable, though not experienced, fact (such as Devadatta's eating at night).

Here one should be aware of several mistakes in interpretation. Satchidananda Murti, for example, takes *anumiti jñāna* (inferential knowledge) to be the same as Kantian *Verstand,*[14] just as he also takes *arthāpatti* of Advaita Vedānta to be the equivalent of Kantian *Vernunft* or speculative reason.[15] In his words: "Here and in the following paragraphs by 'reason' I mean that which Kant called 'understanding' (*Verstand),* i.e. the faculty of making mediate inferences." A little later, in the context of explaining God as a necessary postulate of reason for both Kant and Hegel, Murti remarks: "I suggest that this 'postulation', is similar to the *arthāpatti* of Advaita Vedānta.

It is neither inference, nor perception, but another way of cognition, a *pramāṇa,* and is the function of mind in its *'Vernunft'* aspect."[16]

With regard to *anumiti* it is easy to show that its function is very different from the Kantian *Verstand.* The Kantian *Verstand* is not a faculty of inference; it is rather a faculty of judgment, as he explicitly states at the outset of the chapter on "Transcendental Logic."[17] Secondly, *Verstand* with its categorial framework makes the systematic organization of sense-representations into the objects of nature possible and in this sense constitutes the phenomenal world. *Anumiti* does not have any such grand ontological function. *Anumiti* is a knowledge that follows perception and justifies the belief, e.g., that there is fire on that mountain by appealing to an already determined relation of *vyāpti* between smoke and fire and applying it to the particular case under consideration. Another means of justifying a belief, empirical or non-empirical, is by using the method of *arthāpatti* or postulation. The case of "Devadatta must be eating at night because he does not eat during the day and yet grows fatter" involves postulation in support of an empirical belief. It is important to note in this context that *arthāpatti* is not the Kantian *Vernunft.* Kantian *Vernunft* makes use of a principle of *Verstand* (such as the principle of causality) and extends its application beyond the limits of experience to reach the unconditioned. If this *Vernunft* goes wrong and fails to yield knowledge; it only yields illusions. *Arthāpatti* can be used to lead us from a given experienced datum to another experienceable, though not experienced, fact (such as Devadatta's eating at night). When applied to establish the falsity of the world and the identity of the *ātman* and the *brahman, arthāpatti* starts from unquestioned validity of the texts of the *śruti.* The reasoning is very different from the causal argument for a First Cause

which the Kantian critique of *Vernunft* advances. *Arthāpatti* is rather closer to the Kantian transcendental argument, e.g., the argument:

> Geometry is synthetic *a priori*
> The subject matter of Geometry is space,
> Therefore, space must be *a priori* intuition

This is a new kind of reasoning characterizing Kant's philosophical arguments and so does not fit either the pattern of reasoning of *Verstand* or that of the *Vernunft*. Beliefs can also be justified in many other ways than inference and postulation. Whereas both empirical and non-empirical beliefs (just as belief in God) can be justified by *anumāna*, empirical beliefs can also be justified by perceptual evidence. Both kinds of beliefs, empirical and non-empirical, may also be justified by appealing to *śabda*, the former by *laukika śabda* (the testimony of a truthful person) and the latter by appealing to the texts of the *śruti*. For example, "one who knows the *brahman* becomes *brahman*" and "the world is false," are beliefs which can be justified by the argument that one has to postulate their truth in order for some sentences of the *śruti* to be true.

I have outlined above some of the examples of how an Advaitin might give reasons for her beliefs, and so using any or all of them would constitute rational thinking. In general therefore, I would suggest that while *buddhi* seems to be the *faculty* of reason, the activity of rational thinking may be characterized as *pramāṇair artha parīkṣaṇa*, i.e., an examination of the subject matter by the help of the *pramāṇas*. *It is the entire system of pramāṇas that encapsulates rational thinking, not simply one single pramāṇa.*

One does not simply use the *pramāṇas* to justify one's belief but also uses them to critique and refute the beliefs of other philosophers, and this also falls within the purview

of rational thinking. Rational thinking is as much concerned with *svapakṣa sthāpanā* as with *parapakṣa nirākaraṇa*. One uses the *pramāṇas* to justify one's own position, as well as to refute the opponent's position, in which case one shows, for example that the opponent's position involves fallacious inference and *hetvābhāsas*, and possibly also, goes against the *śruti* texts. But one must also point out that in refuting the opponent's position one may go beyond the *pramāṇas*. One may use *tarka*, that is to say, a counter-factual reasoning, though *tarka* is not a *pramāṇa*. One may also show that the opponent's position involves self-contradiction such as vicious circle and infinite regress. Such arguments go beyond the *pramāṇas* in the strict sense. The point I am making is that rational thinking has two aspects: positive and negative. It is not only an application of the *pramāṇas*, but also a critique of the other positions, and such a critique goes beyond the *pramāṇas* by showing how the position of others involves unacceptable consequences, some of which may be purely logical fallacies and others such non-logical fallacies as *anirmokṣaprasaṅga*. On this interpretation, while *buddhi* is the faculty of reasoning, the activity of reasoning consists in applying the whole battery of *pramāṇas* and other critical apparatus.

There are two aspects of the theory of *pramāṇas* that must be kept in mind, leaving aside listing the *pramāṇas* and defending the list.

1. One must not lose sight of the fact that Indian philosophers with the exception of the Buddhists (who accept two *pramāṇas*, viz., perception and inference, corresponding to two kinds of objects, particular and the universal respectively), argue that the various *pramāṇas* may, or do in fact converge on the one and the same object. This is the thesis of *pramāṇasamplava*.

2. The second thesis is that different *pramāṇas* may be ranked or ordered with regard to their relative strength and weakness. If we can keep these two aspects of the *pramāṇa* theory in mind, then we can be clear about how rational thinking proceeds with regard to a particular domain.

The doctrine of *pramāṇasamplava* is the doctrine that all or some of the *pramāṇas* may be made to converge on one and the same object. Thus, that "there is fire on the hill" may be perceived, inferred, known by the report of the trusted speaker, etc. and so on. But given the fact that Advaita Vedāntins accept the theory of *pramāṇasamplava*, it must be the case that the *brahman* is not only known by *śabda pramāṇa* but can be inferred, determined by *arthāpatti*, and so on. What is most important for our purposes is to note that even perception, more specifically *nirvikalpaka* perception, yields an awareness of mere existence (*sanmātragrāhi*), which is the nature of the *brahman*. In other words, the thesis is that when we first apprehend an object perceptually, at the first moment, there is an awareness of something being there, which is the knowledge of mere existence, which, at the next moment is determined conceptually, as a chair, a table, or whatever the case may be. Furthermore, as the author of *Vedānta Paribhāṣā* shows, consciousness is the essence of perceptuality and insofar as it always manifests itself, there is a perception of mere consciousness, which is the nature of the *brahman*. Thus, *brahman*, although the words of the *śruti* first tell us about the nature of the *brahman*, there is always an awareness of the *brahman* in our everyday perceptual experience, which only confirms and corroborates what *śruti* says about the *brahman*.

This thesis of *pramāṇasamplava* implies that the *brahman* is established as much by *śruti* as by direct perception. At this point one might ask even if this is so, why bring in the

concept of reason? Is not *śruti* revelation of the *brahman* to the *ṛṣis* of antiquity? If that is so, then in Advaita Vedānta the *brahman* is established on the basis of *śruti* and experience. I reject this interpretation of *śruti* as well as of experience.

Śruti does not mean "revelation,"[18] it rather means "heard text"; it is *śabda pramāṇa* (*āpta vākya*). A *pramāṇa* being what justifies a cognitive claim, both *śruti* and *nirvikalpaka* perception are used to justify the beliefs about the nature of the *brahman*. That is why I bring both under the concept of "reason."

Secondly, notwithstanding the fact that the various *pramāṇas* may be applied to one and the same object, there is a rank ordering of the relative strengths and weaknesses of the *pramāṇas* with regard to the objects of certain kinds. For example, with regard to present sensuous objects, sense perception is the strongest, inference next, and *śabda* is weaker than both. With regard to supersensible objects, however, *śabda* is the strongest, inference next, and sense perception does not apply. With regard to the *brahman*, *śabda* is the strongest and our task as philosophers is to interpret the words of *śruti*. We may also use inference to support it and use *nirvikalpaka* perception.

Thus, a full appreciation of the nature of reason requires that we transcend the logician's interest in the formal structure of reasoning, rise to the level of appreciating its guiding *telos* toward the real *per se*. We should at the same time recognize that the *pramāṇa* theory, which sets up the *pramāṇas*, defines each, defends the claims of each to be *sui generis* and irreducible (which the Indian epistemologists do with such admirable thoroughness), and ranks them in the order of "strength" ("which is stronger than which?") may now be regarded as reason's own reflection upon itself, where reason justifies its own modes of validating beliefs. We thus come to thematize three levels of operation of reason:

1. The primary level of validating beliefs about objects (⟶ modes of reasoning), the exercise of *pramāṇas* for the purpose of either justifying or rejecting particular claims and theories;
2. The secondary level of aiming at a unified cognition of reality as a whole, considering the entire scheme of *pramāṇas* (*pramāṇasamplava*), i.e., all *pramāṇas* —in their interrelationship and their relative strengths and weaknesses and justifying the completeness of the list leading to (⟶ Reason)
3. The tertiary level of critical self-reflection (as manifested in philosophy as a *pramāṇa* theory) on the part of reason, the totality of which is known and determined not by particular application of a particular *pramāṇa*, but by the hermeneutics of the text and questioning the verdict of the various levels of phenomenological experience that we have.

This last is a reflection of the higher order; it is reason reflecting, justifying and elaborating upon its own modes of operation. In reflecting, reason reflects upon itself, and in that sense goes beyond the first two levels. Let me add a fourth level, as implied in my earlier remarks, *where reason points beyond itself to transcending its own domain.*

One may oppose the position as I have defended here using Śaṃkara's pronouncements to the effect that all usages of *pramāṇa* and *prameya* are grounded in *avidyā* and so are ultimately false. It must be noted that from that large metaphysical standpoint from which not only all empirical *pramāṇas* and *prameyas* are false, but also *śruti* insofar as it consists of verbal instructions and is infected by the category of difference (*bheda*). However, it is important to recognize that these ultimate judgments on the validity of the *pramāṇas* must be correctly understood. If reason *justifies our cognitive claims and is used as a critique of all beliefs, then it must also be*

a critique of reason itself. Advaita Vedānta not only gives us a theory of reason or a rational justification of beliefs, but also, as it should be, a critique of reason itself. Reason is a human instrument of measuring human beliefs and it serves its purpose well. *That is the best we have. Reason also exceeds itself and shows its own limitations.* While, on the one hand, it shows how much we can know within the human context, it also points to what lies outside of the human context, where its modes of determinations can only have a metaphorical and not literal application. One does not transcend reason simply by talking about revelation or experience, for these are also concepts derived from the human context and owe their power to the implied use of reason.

Of all the Sanskrit terms, i.e., *"anumāna," "vicāra," "manana," "tarka" "yukti,"* only *"manana"* or *"vicāra"* (reflection or analytic consideration) best captures the idea of rational thinking. *Manana* consists in establishing one's own position, a refutation of the opponent's point of view, and rejecting all arguments that lead to skepticism, which certainly involve logical reasoning but also transcend simple logical reasoning. They involve appealing to experience, precisely describing the reports of what is presented in an experience and correctly using language to describe the experienced as it is presented. Clearly, such an activity has two aspects: logical and phenomenological. It is only those interpreters who wrongly translate *yukti, tarka,* as reason, take Śaṃkara's statements to be a critique of reason. Śaṃkara is not critiquing reason, but rather a form of reasoning. I look upon Śaṃkara's critique of *yukti, tarka,* etc., as explicating the nature of rational reflection with regard to the proper object of Advaita Vedānta, viz., self/ *brahman*. In order to clearly grasp Śaṃkara's conception of reason, we must have a clear understanding of what Śaṃkara's means by *tarka.*

3. *Tarka*: Its Role and Limits: We know that "*tarka*" in the logical literature, that is to say in the discussions on inference, has a specific meaning; it stands for, as stated earlier, arguments from a counter-factual premise such as "if fire were not the cause of smoke...;" In Advaita, however, *tarka* may mean either inference, or any argument, or any analytic consideration, or postulation (*arthāpatti*). Though the goal of this section is not to enter into a detailed discussion of the meaning and significance of these terms, it is important to underscore the point that these terms have different meanings and usages. Śaṃkara, however, uses these terms to mean "modes of reasoning" and so, by extension, "reason." Given that Śaṃkara's *Brahmasūtra-bhāṣya* (*BSBh*) is taken by all to be an authentic writing of the master, I will analyze passages from this commentary in order to ascertain his conception of *tarka*.

Śaṃkara in the context of commenting on the aphorism "*janmādyasya yataḥ*" ("it is that from which all this arises, etc.")[19] meaning that the *brahman* is the cause of the origin, subsistence, and dissolution of the world of multiplicity of names and forms, states that this statement does not establish a conclusion that has been reached on the basis of an inference or any other means of true cognition; the aphorism rather strings together the flowers of the sentences of the Vedānta. Realization of the *brahman* results from the firm conviction arising from the determination of the meaning of the Vedāntic texts, not from inference or any other means of true cognition. However, in order to strengthen the determination of the meaning (*tadarthagrahaṇadārḍhyāya*) and significance of Upaniṣadic texts (such as the aphorism under consideration), one may employ inference *as long as it does not conflict with the* Upaniṣadic texts.[20] He reminds his readers that the Upaniṣadic texts themselves use *tarka*, e.g., "the self is to be seen, to be heard, *to be thought about*, to be meditated upon,"[21]

to strengthen the conclusions of the *śruti* texts; therefore, reasoning is an important tool. Śaṃkara states: "The heard texts which are the only means of true cognition in the inquiry about *dharma,* are not so in inquiry into the *brahman;* here (in the latter case), those texts together with experiences (*anubhavādaya*), as far as possible, are the means of true cognition, because the object of the inquiry into the *brahman* is an entity which *is* and the knowledge of the *brahman* culminates in experience."[22] To argue that the *brahman,* being a real existent being, can be known through other means of true cognition is futile, because the *brahman,* like an empirical thing, is not an object of the senses, so any connection between the world consisting of names and forms and the *brahman* cannot be empirically perceived; therefore, the thesis of the aphorism—that the *brahman* is the cause of the world—is not the conclusion of a logical inference, but rather represents the conclusive view of the *śruti* texts that describe the *brahman* as pure, consciousness, eternal and free.

Śaṃkara provides further insights on his view on reason in the course of an argument in the second chapter of the *BSBh* in the context of a dispute between the Sāṃkhya philosopher and the Advaitin. The topic under discussion is whether the *brahman* is the material cause of the world. To refute Sāṃkhya arguments that (1) the world cannot arise from the *brahman* on account of the differences in their nature, and (2) given that the *brahman* is an established reality other means of true cognition besides *śruti* should be available, Śaṃkara argues that no similarity is ever perceived between the formless *brahman* and sensible qualities, and that the *brahman* cannot be the object of inference or comparison. Śaṃkara cites many *śruti* and *smṛti* passages[23] to substantiate his thesis. Regarding the contention of the opponents that reflection (*mantavyo*) is explicitly mentioned in the *śruti* after hearing (e.g., in *BU*, II.4.5 quoted above)

for attaining the knowledge of the *brahman*, Śaṃkara points out that one cannot introduce merely discursive or speculative reasoning ("*śuṣkatarka*" = lit. "dry reasoning") in disguise, rather it is only the reasoning that comes after the hearing of the scriptural texts as an aid to *śruti* that has been recommended."[24] Reasoning is helpful, indeed necessary, to comprehend the full import of the *śruti* texts. He goes on to elucidate the kind of reasoning that would be acceptable to him with regard to the self: "since the states of dreaming and waking contradict each other, the self is not what is present in both, and since in deep sleep the self leaves (i.e., is without) empirical multiplicity, [the self] has pure existence as its nature; and because the cause and the effect are non-different, it [the self] is non-different from the *brahman*,"[25] and concludes this aphorism by noting that in II.1.11, he will further provide not only a defence of the above argument but also demonstrate the inconclusiveness of speculative reasoning.

Śaṃkara subjects *tarka* to most devastating attack in II.1.11. The aphorism proceeds from "*tarkasya apratiṣṭhānāt*." At the outset of this aphorism, Śaṃkara notes: "pure reasoning being based upon mere speculation of a person, is unfounded, because speculation is inconclusive."[26] The thoughts of some clever persons are refuted by other clever persons, and the thoughts of other clever persons are refuted by still more clever persons. Even such eminent scholars (*prasiddhamāhātmyasya*) as Kapila[27] and Kaṇāda,[28] whose great eminence is well recognized for example, hold contradictory views.

If it is objected that not all reasoning is fallacious, because even the thesis that all reasoning is fallacious must itself be proved by reasoning, and that in the absence of reasoning all practical affairs will be useless, it is conceded that reasoning does hold good in certain cases. However, in the matters of highest truth, i.e., in the matter of knowing

reality or *brahman*, there is no possibility of doubt, and that one can know reality only by the means of true cognition (*pramāṇas*). In the matter of the highest truth, we need something more than reasoning. In such experiential cognition as "fire is hot," there is no room for controversy, but in cognitions arising from speculative reasoning there are divergent opinions: "in the case of right knowledge it is not possible to have controversy among people, however, it is well known that cognitions based merely on reasoning contradict one another. If something (a thesis) is established by one logician to be right knowledge, it is refuted by another; and, in turn, the latter establishes something (a thesis), that is disproved by still another."[29]

Śaṃkara's main interest in all this discussion is not to refute the ordinary application of inferential reasoning. His purpose is to emphasize that the question of the origin of the universe cannot be settled through "mere" reasoning. Both the Sāṃkhya thesis that *prakti* is the cause of the universe and the Vaiśeṣika atomism are not only supported by reasonings; they are also refuted by their opponents using reasoning. Instead, the *śrutis* support the Vedāntic thesis that the world originates from the *brahman*, while reasoning can be used to support it as well. Within the limits of empirical world, logic has its validity, but outside of these limits, its validity is called into question. Śaṃkara's position here is much like Kant's inasmuch as for Kant also logical reasoning has no conclusive efficacy with regard to what is beyond sensible experience, and leads to antinomies and contradictions. Only, where logic independent reasoning fails, Śaṃkara takes recourse to the *śruti*, but Kant takes no such recourse. Clearly, Śaṃkara uses "*tarka*" in a very general sense, and not in the specific sense of counter-factual argument in which the Naiyāyikas use it. In the broadest sense, he uses *tarka* for any logical argument whatsoever. In a somewhat narrow sense, it stands for *anumāna* or

inference having the standard structure. When not used to support the theses of *śruti* or any other testimony of experience, *tarka* is "dry"; when used to support and argumentatively strengthen the *śruti*, it is genuinely meaningful, and authentic. Only the last sort of *tarka* can contribute to, serve as an aid to and as accessory to, the knowledge of the *brahman*, and not otherwise. Thus, Śaṃkara, in stating that mere *tarka* cannot give the truth, that it must follow the guidance of *śruti*, was not critiquing reason, but rather the tendency of philosophers to make logical thinking autonomous, as though with mere logical reasoning, one can arrive at the truth.

The mere reasoner or the mere logician who revels in a theory of inference has not yet grasped the true nature of reason. He must grasp the interconnection among *pramāṇas*—i.e., the way they depend upon each other; he must also comprehend their relative "weights." To insist that "*tarka*" must follow experience [which, by the way, in the case of "*anumāna*" follows from its etymology]—as *Pañcadaśī* puts it: *svānubhūtyanusāreṇa tarkyatām mākutarkyatāṃ*[30]— is not to reject reasoning but to lay down conditions of its correct application. *Tarka* may also—as *Pañcapādikā* says: *tatsambhavapradarśanamukhena*[31]—show the *possibility* of an object (and not its actuality), and so point to the *possibility* of experiencing it. Such a position may be acceptable even to the most ardent supporters of logic: logic demonstrates possibility, and not the actuality of an object, only experience (including perception) can establish its actuality.

Since *śruti* is a *śabda pramāṇa*, and *pramāṇas* have different applications and relative strengths in different domains, the use of *śruti*, on my reading, is also using "reasoning," though not in a narrowly construed sense of the term "reasoning." It is a mistake to say the distinction between *tarka* and *śruti* corresponds to the distinction

between reason and revelation. It is equally wrong to interpret Śaṃkara's position as amounting to rejecting reason in favor of revelation. *Śruti* is not revelation, and there is no opposition between *śruti* and reason, which I will discuss next.

4. *Śruti* as Revelation:. It is important to keep in mind, as I proceed in my investigation in the context of Advaita Vedānta, that *the distinction between tarka and śruti does not correspond to the distinction between reason and revelation*. There is no need to spend much more time arguing for my thesis that *śruti* is not revelation. Suffice it to note that the *apauruṣeyatva* (lack of human author) of *śruti* does not mean that it was revealed by a divine author. It rather means that words being eternal, the *śruti* has no beginning. Its origin goes back to beginningless time shrouded in darkness. All that we can do is to interpret its meaning; there is no need to ascertain who composed it and with what intention. One needs to ask such questions as: Does the idea of heard text (*śruti*) imply the idea of revelation? What is the role of revelation here? Who revealed the Vedas? To whom? When? etc. Can the idea of revelation be detached from the idea of God? Did God reveal the Vedas? Which God? Which *devatā*? Did *brahman-ātman* reveal the Upaniṣads? *Brahman-ātman* is not a *kartā;* it is only *cit-svarūpa.* The idea of revelation does not quite fit in. Theistic commentators, e.g., Madhva, have tried to maintain that the Vedas are the *breath* of God. But that only suggests that the Vedas flow spontaneously from the being of the deity; we do not again have revelation. In order that *śrutis* impart knowledge to us, we must ascertain its meaning, and for that purpose must interpret the words, which is a highly discursive, rational activity— as the procedures of Mīmāṃsā demonstrate.

To regard *śruti* as revealed text is to go beyond the idea of the "heard texts," and to add to it ideas derived from other religious traditions. One generally says that the

scriptures are the records of the spiritual experiences of the seers. I do not wish to deny that the seers—or whoever were the authors, had their spiritual experiences. Sometimes it does seem that an author is in fact talking about her own experiences. But most of the texts of the Vedas do not articulate one's own experiences, they are not in the first person, rather they discuss deities, nature, the world at large, and so on. They are heard texts, heard from teachers, who still heard them from their teachers and others—which account for their being called *śruti*. If experiences of some sort *occasioned* them, they are still texts which had to be heard, (but) now read, and interpreted with the help of the rules of interpretation—grammar, etymology, context, etc. No sentence expresses an experience; a sentence expresses a *thought*. *Śruti* defines the tradition on which Indian thinkers take their stand. We are free to interpret it. It is the basis of all our theoretical projects, the basis of reason itself.

In short, the conventional way of opposing reasoning to *śruti* construed as "revelation" or authority, is totally mistaken. *Śruti* is not revelation either by word-meaning or by any implication of its meaning. Construing *śruti* as revelation is imparting surreptitiously a Semitic theological concept into the Vedic tradition. Additionally, taking *śruti* as a *pramāṇa*, that is to say, *śabda pramāṇa*, is not dogmatically appealing to authority which our (Hindu) religious tradition does not allow one to do in any case. For those of us who are familiar with Indian philosophy very well know that the status of *śruti* as a *pramāṇa* is painstakingly established by Mīmāṃsā and other systems of Indian philosophy through a series of rational arguments. When *śruti* is established rationally as a *pramāṇa* and its strength relative to other *pramāṇas* is established, then using *śruti* as a *pramāṇa* no longer violates the rules of reason. Establishing one's position by appealing to *śruti* then becomes as much rational as appealing to, say, inference. Thus, one is not

submitting reason to a higher criticism using a supra-rational authority which is how many Indian thinkers take the appeal to *śruti* to be, rather it is using the *pramāṇas* according to the internal strengths and weaknesses of the different *pramāṇas* in relation to the others. For example, inference is only a pseudo-*pramāṇa*, if it contradicts perception, but so also if it contradicts *śruti*. There are situations in which *anumāna* is stronger than perception, just as in the case of *dharma* and *adharma śruti* becomes a stronger *pramāṇa* than the others.

In this sense then Indian philosophical thinking is a supremely rational activity. The different levels of rational thinking correspond to the different kinds of application of the *pramāṇas*. At the initial level, one applies only perception. At the next level one applies perception aided by inference. One may proceed to apply *śruti* as well as the method of postulation as a kind of transcendental argument. Thus, I contend that different *pramāṇas*, which include *śabda* are various "modes of reasoning." What could reason be besides a mode of reasoning? The point that I am trying to make is as follows: though Indian thinkers do not thematize "reason" itself, a conception of "reason" is still there. Reason includes all the *pramāṇas*, all means of validating beliefs, it both includes, and differentiates into, the various *pramāṇas*—curiously enough, into both perception and *śabda*. To contrast reason with revelation—similar to the contrast between mediate and immediate cognition—is mistaken. Perceptual justification is as much rational, though immediate, as it is inferential which is mediate. *Śabda* as a *pramāṇa* may go through various phases, culminating—in the case of the sentences of the Upaniṣads—in an immediate awareness. When all this is understood along with the Vedāntic thesis of *pramāṇasaṃplava*, one is led to recognize that the function of reason in its various modes is to enable *buddhi* to cognize reality as it is in the long run. It follows or

is dependent upon the nature of the thing (*vastutantra*) rather than the preference or the will of a person (*puruṣatantra*). Perception is the only *pramāṇa* which by itself presents its object to immediate seeing. After one leaves the domain of perception one enters into the domain of mediation. Even the rational use of *śruti* as a *pramāṇa* is a mediate activity, mediated by the rules of interpreting the Vedic *vākyas*, given that the *śrutis* discuss them. Vedānta, however, also keeps the path open for conceptual thinking and understanding to culminate in an intuitive experience of the reality being talked about. This is brought about by what is called in Vedānta "*śabdajanyāparokṣa anubhūti*," which is still a *pramāṇa*, sometimes called the *carama antaḥkaraṇa vṛtti.* It is "final" in the sense that as it destroys the original ignorance, it also destroys itself. The *pramāṇas* thus lead to an "intuitive"[32] experience only at a point where they have completely fulfilled their role and cease to be. This is the only point at which one could speak of transcending reason, not by revelation but by an intuitive experience, which is the goal of all rational thinking. It culminates in an "intuitive" experience of reality. This experience, however, is not a substitute for reason, but the final self-manifestation of the *brahman* after *avidyā* is destroyed by the highest *pramāṇa*.

One consequence of the conception of reason that I am proposing is that reason is attuned to the nature of reality, that the two—the rational and the real—are fully coordinated to one another. Furthermore, reason, as cognition of the real, includes within its *modus operandi*, what is called experience (both perceptual and the higher experience that is born out of *śabda*). To expound reality as it is, is the highest rational cognition of that reality. The opposition between reason and experience that is set up by the narrow "reasoners" (*tārkika*) and the "empiricists" (i.e., those who emphasize sense-experience) is false, as also the opposition between *pramāṇa* and *anubhava*. Reason is a

structured whole, whose final basis is "consciousness" as the "witness" and the "judge" of all cognitive claims. Considered in this way, appeal to "*śabda*" and "*śruti*" in its right context, is a properly critical and rational activity.

Concluding Remarks

It is time to conclude this chapter with some summary statement of the position adopted and defended by me. This would consist of the following theses:

1) *Śruti* is not revelation, but rather the heard text which is the foundation of Vedic religion and culture.
2) Indian philosophical thought operates with a concept of "*reason*," though the concept itself is not thematized. I agree with J. L. Mehta that it first appears in the Vedic texts, but more pointedly in the Upaniṣads.[33]
3) As operative, it stands for the entire *pramāṇa* theory of the philosophies. This theory is highly structured; (i) into the various *pramāṇas*; (ii) then a demonstration of each one's irreducibility; (iii) a demonstration of how they converge with regard to one and the same reality; and finally, (iv) the idea of *śabdapramāṇa*. In Vedānta, reason points beyond itself to the final knowledge of the *brahman*.

Finally, I need to state what, in my view, is the resulting relation between reason and experience. If a *pramāṇa* is the reason for justifying a belief, the *pramāṇa* produces the (corresponding) *pramā* or *anubhava* which is nothing but the manifestation of an object (*viṣaya-prakāśa*); the latter is an experience. This structure goes through all stages of knowledge right up to the ultimate *vṛtti* having the form "I am *brahman*," which destroys the last trace of *avidyā*—so that the *brahman* shines by its own light, which *brahman* is by nature. Reason transcends itself, not into the supposed

spiritual experience of a person but into what it eternally is. Up until this stage, what may be called "reason," the *buddhi,* is a developing process in which reason and experience are blended together.

With this in mind, let me next proceed to examine the concept of "experience" in Advaita Vedānta.

Endnotes

1. See *Tradition and Reflection: Explorations in Indian Thought,* Chapter 1.
2. John Taber, " Reason, Revelation, and Idealism in Śaṅkara's Vedānta," *Journal of Indian Philosophy,* 9 (1981), pp. 283–307, at p. 303N7.
3. K. N. Upadhyaya "Śaṅkara on Reason, Scriptural Authority, and Self-Knowledge," *Journal of Indian Philosophy,* 19 (1991), p. 124.
4. For a discussion of this question, see Appendix III (on intuition) of this work.
5. *tasya ca abhivyaktasya caitanyasya ekatvepi abhivyañjakāntaḥkaraṇabhāgabhedāt tridhāvyapadeśo bhavati. kartṛbhāgāvachhinaścidamsaḥ pramātā. kriyābhāgāvachhinnaścidamśaḥ pramāṇaṃ viṣayagata abhivyakti yogyatvabhāgāvachhinnaścidamśaḥ pramitiḥ prameyaṃ tu viṣayagataṃ brahmacaitanyamevājñātam. tadevam ca jñātam satphalam.* Abhyankar, M.V.S., ed. and trans. Madhusūdanasarasvati 's *Siddhāntabindu*. Government Oriental Series —Class A, No. 2. Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1986, pp. 57–58.
6. Although Śaṃkara discusses the inner sense (*antaḥkaraṇa*) at various places in his writings, he never makes his own position on this important concept very clear. The question is generally raised whether he believed in one inner sense or more than one? At one place, Śaṃkara uses the expression " *antaḥkaraṇadvaya* " (twofold inner senses) which leads one to believe that he recognizes two inner senses rather than one, although one is never told what those two might be (*Upadeśasāhasrī*, I. 3.116; henceforth *Upadeśa*). At another place, Śaṃkara also articulates *ātman* as the witness of all

antaḥkaraṇas (*kṛtsnāntaḥkaraṇekṣaṇa*) which suggests that there are more than two *antaḥkaraṇas* (*Upadeśa*, I.18.176).

7. *taccātmanā upādhibhūtamantaḥkaraṇaṃ mano, buddhirvijñānaṃ cittamiti cānekadhā tatra tatrābhilapyate. kvacicca vṛttivibhāgena saṃśayādivṛttikaṃ mana ityucyate, niścayādivṛttikaṃ buddhiriti.* J.L. Shastri, ed., *Brahmasūtraśāṅkarabhāṣyaṃ* (New Delhi, India: Motilal Banarsidass, 1988), II.3.32, p. 541. Henceforth this edition will be referred to as *BSBh*.

8. *... śā ca vṛttiścaturvidhā —saṁśayaḥ, niścayaḥ, garvaḥ, smaraṇaṃ iti. evaṁ sati vṛttibhedena ekam api antaḥkaraṇaṁ mana iti buddhir iti ahaṁkāra iti cittam iti cākhyāyate.*

   taduktam —
   mano buddhir ahaṁkāraś cittaṁ karaṇam āntaram.
   saṁśayo niścayo garvaḥ smaraṇaṁ viśayā ime.

   Bina Gupta, *Perceiving in Advaita Vedānta* (PA: Bucknell University Press, 1992), p. 225. Henceforth this work will be cited as *Perceiving*.

9. In many of the texts quoted above, *manas* is said to be the faculty of doubt. Upon seeing an object at a distance, one wonders " is it a tree or a man"? The *manas* reaches up to the doubt. The resolution of doubt and resulting certitude, is a function of *buddhi*. Therefore, *buddhi* yields knowledge.

10. *..manasasastu parā buddhir...*, *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, III.10

11. *manaso'pi parāsūkṣ matarā...* .Śaṃkara on *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, III.10.

12. *tathā manasastu parā buddhir niscayātmikā*, *Bhagavad Gitā* III. 42.

13. According to Kapila and *Sāṃkhya Kārikā*, *buddhi* is the chief agent or *kartā*, the seat of all knowledge impressions, is responsible for the enjoyment or liberation of *puruṣa*. When the *buddhi* undergoes modification by assuming the form of the object it is called knowledge. These modifications are of five kinds: *pramāṇa, viparyaya, vikalpaḥ, nidrā, smṛti*. Pleasure and pain according to Yoga are modifications of the mind other than the *buddhi*.

14. K. Satchidananda Murty, *Revelation and Reason in Advaita Vedānta* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), p. 322. Henceforth this work will be cited as *Revelation and Reason*.

15. Ibid., p. 328.
16. Ibid.
17. "Now we can reduce all acts of the understanding to judgment, and the understanding may therefore be represented as a *faculty of judgment*." *Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, A69=B94, p. 106.
18. For a discussion of *śruti* as " revelation," see Appendix I of this work.
19. *BSBh* , I. 1. 2, p. 46.
20. *vedāntavākyakusumagrathanārthatvāt sūtrāṇām. vedāntavākyāni hi sūtrairudāhṛtya vicāryante vākyārthavicāraṇādhyavasānanirvṛttā hi brahmāvagatih, nānumānādipramāṇāntaranirvṛttā. satsu tu vedāntavākyeṣu jagato janmādikaraṇavādiṣu tadarthagrahaṇadārḍhyāyānumānam api vedāntavākyāvirodhi pramāṇam bhavan na nivāryate.* Ibid., pp. 50–51.
21. . . . *ātmā vā are draṣṭavyaḥ śrotavyo mantavyo* . .. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, II.4.5.
22. *na dharmajijñāsāyām iva śrutyādayaḥ eva pramāṇam brahmajijñāsāyām, kiñtu śrutyādayo'nubhavādayaśca yathā saṃbhavam iha pramāṇam; anubhavāvasānatvādbhūtavastuviṣayatvācca brahmajñānasya. BSBh*, I. 1. 2, pp. 51-52.

According to *Bhāmatī* here " *śrutyādayaḥ* ," means "*śruti-itihāsa-purāṇa-smṛtayaśca*," i.e., the heard texts, history, the *purāṇas*, and the *smṛti* texts. Further *Bhāmatī* adds that one ascertains the meaning of a text by using a mark (*liṅga*), meaning of a sentence, subject matter (*prakaraṇa*), relatedness of succeeding meanings known as *sthāna* and other features known as *samākhyā* and *dṛṣṭānta*, Ibid., p. 51.

Nyāyanirṇayaḥ, on the other hand, says that: "*śrutyādi*" refers to " *liṅgavākyaprakaraṇasthānasamākhyā*," Ibid., p. 52.

What does "*adi* " mean in " *anubhavādayaḥ*"? *Nyāyanirṇayaḥ* states that the word "*ādi* " is meant to include inference, etc. (*anumānādisamgrahārtham*). So the commentator writes: "*śrutyādīnāmanumānādīnāṃa śabdaśaktitātparyāv-adhṛtidvārā anubhavamutpādya* . . . ." Ibid.

What is *anubhava? Bhāmatī* states that it is the *phala* of *pramāṇa* by means of the destruction of *avidyā*. Ibid.

What is " *bhūtavastu*" in *bhāṣya* ? It is a mistake to translate "*bhūtavastu* " as "accomplished," which means what has been achieved by human or by any other process. The *brahman* simply is. It does not become. "*Vastu* " does not mean a fact; it means a thing, an entity, a being, a reality whose nature can be established (*siddha*) by the *pramāṇas*. "*Anubhavāvasānatvāt*" of the *bhāṣya* is explained by *Bhāmatī* thus: " *brahmānubhavo brahmasākṣātkāraḥ paramaḥ puruṣārthaḥ*," Ibid.

23. For example: "*naiṣā tarkeṇa matirāpaneyā proktānyenaiva sujñānāya preṣṭha*," "Not by reasoning is this knowledge acquired, my dear, only spoken by another [it is] well understood," *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* 1.2.9.; "*avyakto'yam acintyo 'yam avikāryo'yamucyate*," "It is called unmanifest, unthinkable, unchangeable . . .," *Bhagavad Gītā*, 11.25.

24. *yadapi śravaṇavyatirekeṇa mananaṃ vidadhacchabdaeva tarkam apyādṛtavyaṃ darśayatītyuktam. nānena miṣeṇa śuṣkatarkasyā-trātmalābhaḥ saṃbhavati. śrutyanugṛhīta eva hyatra tarko 'nubhavāṅgatvenāśrīyate. BSBh*, II. 1. 6, pp. 360-61.

What is "*śuṣkatarka*"? *Ratnaprabhā* states: "*śuṣka*" means *śruti-anapekṣa*"; " dry" means " independent of *śruti*." Why is it called "dry"? *Nyāyanirṇaya* explains " dryness" as follows: "*anugrāhyamānahīnatayā*" (being without knowledge upon which to follow) and *nirālambanatvaṃ*" (not having an object to depend upon). Ibid., p. 360.

The *bhāṣya* states that *tarka* should be subservient to *anubhava* (*anubhavāṅga*). What does this signify? According to *Bhāmatī*, *manana* is to serve the purpose of "*anubhava*" or "*brahmasākṣātkāra*"; *manana* destroys the sense of impossibility of its object, i.e., *brahman* (p. 361). This may mean nothing more than that *manana* serves the purpose of *anubhava* in the sense of *pramā*, or, in this case, *śabdajanyāparokṣajñāna*. *Anubhava* does not lead to the knowledge of the *brahman*; *anubhava* is *brahmajñāna*. It comes at the end of, as the culmination of, all *pramāṇas* including *śruti*; thus, *anubhava* is not a *pramāṇa* but *pramā*.

25. *svapnāntabuddhāntayorubhayor itaretaravyabhicārād ātmano 'nanvāgatatvaṃ, sampraśāde ca prpañcaparityāgena sadātmanā saṃpatter niśprapaṇsadātmatvaṃ prapañcasya brahma-prabhavatvāt kāryakāraṇānanyatvanyāyena brahmāvyatireka ity evaṃjātīyakaḥ.* Ibid., p. 361.

26. *puruṣotprekṣāmātra nibandhanāstarkā apratiṣṭhitā bhavanti. BSBh*,II.1.11, pp. 366–67.

27. Tradition regards Kapila as the founder of the *Sāṃkhya* school; however, *Sāṃkhya Sūtra* attributed to him is not extant. On the *Sāṃkhya* view, traced back to Kapila, the mythical writer of antiquity, the world arises through a process of differentiation of the pure undifferentiated stuff of which everything is made, known as " *prakṛti*" or "original nature."

28. Kaṇāda is the founder of the Vaiśeṣika school of Indian philosophy. On his view, the world of experience comes into being as a result of the combination of atoms. The atoms themselves are not created, nor are they destroyed. When the world is dissolved, the atomic combinations are dissolved, but not atoms themselves.

Note that the Sāṃkhya and Vaiśeṣika accounts are opposed to each other. On the Sāṃkhya view, the one *prakṛti* becomes many through self-differentiation, while according to the Vaiśeṣikas, many atoms combine to produce one unified world. The Advaita view is certainly closer to but not identical with the Sāṃkhya view.

29. *samyag jñāne puruṣāṇām vipratipattiranupapannā tarka jñānānām tvanyonya virodhāt prasiddhā vipratipattiḥ yaddhi kenacit tārkikena idam eva samyag jñānam iti pratipāditam tad apareṇa vyutthāpyate, tenāpi pratiṣṭhāpitam tato' pareṇa vyutthāpyate iti prasiddhaṃ loke.* Ibid., II.1.12, pp. 368–69.

Bhāmatī concedes that Śaṃkara is not rejecting all *tarka* "*na vayaṃ anyatra tarkamapramāṇayāmaḥ. kintu jagatkāraṇsattve. . .*," we reject *tarka*, argues, Śaṃkara with regard to the existence of the cause of the world. Ibid., p. 368.

30. *Pañcadaśī*, VI.30.

31. *Śrirama Śāstrī, Pañcapādikā* (Madras: Government Oriental Manuscript Library, 1958), p. 172.

32. For a discussion of " intuition," see Appendix III of this work.

33. J.L. Mehta, *The Philosophy of Martin Heidegger* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1971). Henceforth this work will be cited as Mehta's *The Philosophy of Martin Heidegger*. Also see J.L. Mehta 's "Heidegger and the Comparison of Indian and Western Philosophy," *Philosophy East and West*, Vol. 20 (July 1970), pp. 303–317.

Chapter Five

Experience in Advaita Vedānta

In Indian philosophy, as far as philosophical Sanskrit is concerned, the two synonyms of "experience," as stated earlier, are "*anubhava*" and "*anubhūti*." Even in the case of these two, in order to recover the entire "meaning" of "experience," one has to modify these words by several adjectives contingent upon the task under consideration. Thus, for example, we find expressions like "*aparokṣānubhūti* (*aparokṣa* + *anubhūti*), which means an *anubhūti* that is immediate, direct. At other times, it is imperative that the object of such *anubhūti* is explicitly mentioned in order to make clear what kind of experience is intended, e.g., "*brahmānubhūti*" (*brahma* + *anubhūti*) and *rasānubhūti* (*rasa* + *anubhūti*). I will return to some of these ideas later.

I

Etymology and Occurrences of the Term "*Anubhava*" in Upaniṣads and Śaṃkara

(i) Etymology

First, I will turn my attention to the austere field of philology in order to determine whether etymology provides any insights into the meaning and function of these concepts, viz., "*anubhava*" or "*anubhūti*" in Indian thought. The roots

and the words arising from them may be taken to have the following etymological senses:

anu = afterwards, toward, after (of time)

bhava = birth, production, origin, becoming, turning into, arising

bhūti = ability, fitness, power, well being, ashes

anubhava = perception, feeling, spirit

anubhāva = enjoyment, power

anubhavin = perceiver, eye-witness

anubhāshita =addressing

anubhūta = experienced, enjoyed

anubhūti = acquisition, apprehension, perception

upalabdhi = acquisition, apprehension, perception

Let us consider the word "*anubhava.*" The prefix "*anu*" signifies "afterwards," "towards," "after" (in order of time). If a cognate formation "*anumāna*" means "*paścāt mānaṃ*" or "the knowledge which comes afterwards," i.e., after some other knowledge (meaning "inference always presupposes prior knowledge" of the *pakṣa* (minor term), *vyāpti* (universal concomitance) and *hetu* (middle term) then the meanings of *anubhava* would depend upon an answer to the question "after what"? Before we answer this question, we must determine the meanings of "*bhava.*" "*Bhava*" means "birth, production, origin, becoming." Since the dictionaries do not supply any etymology, may I suggest as follows: the word "*anubhava*" refers to that which arises, originates, etc., after something, in this case, the object. Knowledge, apprehension, perception, etc., arise, come into being, after their object. The object must already be there in order for it to be known, perceived, etc.; accordingly, one may say that "*anubhava*" is knowledge of an object. Badrinath Śukla gives

a slightly different etymology in his Hindi edition of *Tarkabhāṣā*: "*anubhava* is that which arises immediately after the operation of a *pramāṇa* or a means of true cognition"[1]; it means a *pramā* or a true cognition. Memory is excluded because memory arises after *anubhava*.

A similar etymology is possible of the other word "*upalabdhi*." The word "*labdhi*" means "reaching," "acquisition," etc., while the prefix "*upa*" signifies "near" "close to." The word "*upalabdhi*" then means "to be near" or "reaching," or "close to," or acquisition (of the object), again, meaning knowledge that "reaches," "acquires," "is close to," an object.

All these words, however, while meaning cognition in general emphasize closeness to the object, intimacy, possession, and also enjoyment of the object, in which case "enjoyment" would signify either pleasure or pain.

(ii) Upaniṣadic Occurrences

I will begin with a discussion of the early occurrences of these words in the Upaniṣads and the writings of Śaṃkara. From the Upaniṣads, I will draw your attention to the following selected Upaniṣadic texts:

> "*tayaitarhi vedān nānubhavasi.*" [2] (Speaking to a person who has not taken any food for fifteen days, the author tells him that) with the energy left he will not apprehend (remember) the Vedas.
>
> "*tayā etarhi vedān anubhavasi.*" [3] After taking food, it is said that the person will now apprehend the Vedas.
>
> "*yathā vai dve vāmalake, dve vā kole, dvau vākṣau muṣṭir anubhavati, evaṃ vācaṃ ca nāma ca mano anubhavati.*" [4] Just as the closed fist holds (experiences? feels?) two *āmalaka* or two *kola* or two *akṣa* fruits, so does mind hold both speech and name together.

> *"te sukṛte anubhūtvā imaṃ lokaṃ hīnataraṃ vā viśanti."*[5] Speaking of men who wrongly believe sacrifices, etc. as most important, these men, after having enjoyed the high heavens as a consequence of performing good deeds, again enter the world or even a lower one.
>
> *"atraiṣa devaḥ svapne mahimānam anubhavati, yad dṛṣṭam dṛṣṭam anupaśyati, śrutaṃ śrutam evārtham anuśṛṇoti, deśa digantaraiśca pratyanubhūtam punaḥ punaḥ praty anubhavati. dṛṣṭam cādṛṣṭaṃ ca śrutaṃ cāśrutaṃ cānubhūtaṃ cānanubhūtaṃ ca saccāsad ca sarvam paśyati sarvaḥ paśyati."*[6] (The author describes what mind does in dream. There in sleep that deity [the self identified with the mind] *experiences* greatness.) He sees again what has been seen, he hears again what has been heard, he experiences again and again what has been experienced in different places and directions. What has been seen and not seen, what has been heard and not heard, what has been *experienced* and not been *experienced*, what is existent and non-existent, he sees all; being all he sees (all).
>
> *"bibhūtim anubhūya,"* meaning "having experienced greatness."[7]

In *Praśna Upaniṣad* the phrase *"mahimānaṃ anubhavati"*[8] occurs, clearly meaning "experiences greatness." In the context of explaining the power of *"AUM,"* the sage informs his disciples that he—who meditates upon the letters of *"AUM,"* say, "*A*," is endowed with austerity, chastity, and faith—"experiences greatness." In the next passage, the expression *"bibhūtim anubhūya,"*[9] occurs meaning "having experienced greatness." The sage further informs his disciples that when a person meditates on two letters of *"AUM,"* he becomes enriched in the mind, and enjoys all the good things that the world has to offer.

In the above occurrences in the Upaniṣads, "*anubhava*" clearly moves between "knowing" and "experiencing." It is only in the later logical literature that it comes to be used synonymously with *pramājñāna.* To sum up, *anubhava* in the Upaniṣads means:

a) perception including sensory perception;

b) true cognition other than memory, and

c) experience, without subject/object distinction of the identity of the *ātman* and the *brahman.*

(iii) Occurrences in Śaṃkara's Writings

In the Advaita Vedānta of Śaṃkara, "*anubhava*" is used in many different senses. Quoted below are selected occurrences of "*anubhava*" in Śaṃkara's *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* (*BSBh*):

> "*tathāca loke'nubhavb. . . .*" [10] "In ordinary experience," a shell appears as silver, one moon appears as two. . . Here "*loke anubhava*" means the common experience of humankind [i.e., neither *pramā* nor the knowledge of *ātman* and the *brahman.*]
>
> "*na dharmajijñāsāyām iva śrutyādayaḥ eva pramāṇam brahmajijñāsāyām, kintu śrutyādayo'nubhavādayaśca yathāsaṃbhavam iha pramāṇam; anubhavāvasānatvād bhūtavastuviṣayatvācca brahmajñānasya. kartavye hi viṣaye nānubhavāpekṣāstīti. . .* "[11] The heard texts which are the only means of true cognition in the inquiry about *dharma,* are not so in inquiry into the *brahman*; here (in the latter case), those texts together with the experiences, as far as possible, are the means of true cognition, because the object of the inquiry, the *brahman,* is an entity which *is* and of which experience is the final goal of the knowledge of the *brahman.* In matters of what should be done, i.e. about duty, experience or *anubhava* is not required.

> "*yuktiranubhavasya sannikṛṣyate* . . ."[12] *yukti* is nearer to experience" because it seeks to establish an unseen thing on the analogy of a seen thing, while scriptures, which simply refer to tradition with respect to what they propound, are far removed from experience.

> "*anubhavamupalabdhimanūtpadyamānaṃ smaraṇa-mevānusmṛtiḥ.*"[13] Remembrance is the cognition that is caused by *anubhava*.

> Śaṃkara often quotes *BU* 3.4.1 "*yad eva sākṣād aparokṣād brahma*"[14] to emphasize that the *brahman* is that which is immediately present and directly experienced.

> "*yasya tu naiṣo'nubhavo drāgiva jāyate, taṃ pratyanubhavārtha.*"[15] Those who do not have this *anubhava* (experience) immediately (after *śravaṇa*, *manana*, etc.), for them repeated practice of these is necessary.

> "*kasyacidapyanubhavaṃ notpādayata iti śakyate niyantum.*"[16] It cannot be said that "hearing" and "*manana*", etc. (without repeated performance) do not give rise to *anubhava* (of the identity of the *ātman* and *brahman*)."

> "*anubhavārūḍham eva ca vidyā phalam* . . " The fruit of knowledge is dependent upon (immediate) experience. . . .[17]

In the context of the discussion of an entity, Śaṃkara uses "*anubhava*" at many places. He makes a distinction between *anubhava* of the generic features (*sāmānyaviṣayakaṃ*) and the specific features (*viśeṣaviṣayaṃ*) [...*viśeṣamanubhavati*], and then adds "*viśeṣānubhavaścāvidyayā nivartakaṃ*" (i.e., only the latter removes ignorance.) He also notes that the *brahman* is of the nature of *anubhava* (*anubhavātmako brahma-saṃjñakaḥ*).[18]

Broadly speaking, all the above usages can be reduced to two senses: in one sense, *anubhava* admits a subject-object distinction; in the other (the sense in which the *brahman* is *anubhava*, i.e., *brahman* and the *ātman* are identical) it does not admit of subject-object distinction. The *brahman* is a real entity (*parinispanna vastu*).

II

Advaita Vedānta on *Anubhava*

Most Indian philosophies, as stated earlier, certainly the Vedānta in particular, are spiritual or *ādhyātmika* in their secret as well as explicit intentions. So they not only have an epistemology but also have a spiritual metaphysics—a feature that also characterizes Sāṃkhya and Buddhist philosophies—which goes beyond or deepens the basic *pramāṇa* theory. Hence besides the *ānvīkṣikī* stratum, there is a spiritual stratum for these systems. While the first part advances a list of *pramāṇas*, subdivides each of them, defines and explains the claim of each to be further irreducible, and defends that list as complete, the second part suitably modifies the relevant modes of knowing already accepted in light of the metaphysical theory that is admitted in the system and the eschatological goal that follows from that metaphysics. If this complex structure is kept in mind, then one can trace a path, for example, from the Advaita Vedāntic theory of perception as a *pramāṇa* to a kind of perceptual cognition of the *brahman*, which is the ultimate metaphysical reality of the system *via* traversing the path of many different stages and levels. But the fact is that once perception is established as a way of knowing, and once the *brahman* is established as the only reality that is there, some way of knowing the *brahman* perceptually had to be opened up within the system, which occurs, as we shall see, in the Advaita use of *nirvikalpaka pratyakṣa* (indeterminate

perception), *śabdajanyāparokṣa jñāna,* that is to say an immediate knowledge generated by *śabda* (notice that in the last case two *pramāṇas* had to be joined together), and finally, *brahmānubhava* or experience of the *brahman* which transcends the distinction between *pramāṇa* (true knowledge) and *prameya* (a knowable object).

In this chapter, I argue, as I have done in the chapter on "reason," that in Advaita, a purely *ānvīkṣikī* and the *ādhyātmika* parts are sought to be joined together, and it is at this juncture that a specific concept of *anubhava* or *anubhūti,* i.e., *brahmānubhūti,* makes its appearance.

In the Indian epistemologies, Nyāya and Vedānta alike, *anubhava* or *anubhūti* has been classified into two kinds: *parokṣa* (mediate) and *aparokṣa* (immediate). Though the epistemologists differ regarding their nature and function, they certainly agree that perception is one of them. Inference and knowledge about a thing based on verbal communication are kinds of *anubhava.* In these cognitions an object is no doubt apprehended, but not apprehended directly or immediately. *Aparokṣa anubhava,* on the other hand, is a cognition in which an object is immediately presented. In Nyāya and Mīmāṃsā schools of Indian philosophy, an *aparokṣa anubhava,* that is to say, perception, is still mediated by the sense organs and various contacts, e.g., the contact of the sense organ with the object, of the *manas* with the sense organs, and of the self with the *manas.* But this kind of mediation is not taken to be inconsistent with the claim that perception directly apprehends its object. The Advaita Vedānta is the only system that consistently pursues this notion of immediacy and directness of presentation or perception. Consequently, the author of *Vedānta Paribhāṣā* (*VP*) defines perception as simply consciousness.[19] Strictly speaking, on the Advaita view, with the exception of consciousness, nothing is perceived without mediation. Therefore, in the strictest sense,

according to Advaita, consciousness alone is experienced although in a less rigorous sense, objects of consciousness are also experienced.

In order to further clarify the above two senses of *anubhava* or *anubhūti*, let me appeal to or make use of a distinction which modern German philosophers have made between "*Erfahrung*" and "*Erlebnis*." Both of these translate the English word "experience" into German, but the difference between the two is very important philosophically. *Erfahrung* is of an object; it is intentional. When I perceive the arch on the river that I see through my hotel window, I have an *Erfahrung* of it. But inasmuch as the perceiving is something I live through, and is a part of the flow of my consciousness, the perceiving itself is an *Erlebnis*. I cannot say that I have an *Erlebnis* of this arch. Going back to the Advaita view, one could say that *anubhava* in the strictest sense is *Erlebnis*, although in a looser sense it also includes *Erfahrung*. In order to develop the Advaita theory of experience or *anubhava*, I will develop both these concepts, the most strict and the less strict one.

Considered as *Erfahrung*, perception is knowledge of an object, say of the arch on the river in St. Louis. The Advaita account of the mechanism of perception is complicated and I will not go into its details. But the general idea seems to be the following: since the Advaita metaphysical view, consciousness is the omnipresent reality which all appearances are superimposed, underlying the empirical object of perception there is the same consciousness only as it is "limited" or "conditioned" by that object. My inner sense organ goes out to that object and achieves a formal identity with that object. But my visual sense organ is also a limitation of the same consciousness. I, as the knower, am also of the nature of consciousness, though consciousness as limited by me as the knower. Thus, we have three seemingly different

entities: consciousness as conditioned by the subject/ knower, consciousness as limited by the inner sense, e.g., the visual sense organ, and the same consciousness as limited by the object of perception. An object is directly apprehended or experienced when these three entities reach an identity among themselves. *Anubhava,* in the sense of *Erfahrung,* is the identity that is achieved between the knower, the means of knowing, and the object of knowledge. It is in this sense that the object is directly experienced; it is not merely linguistically or verbally referred to, nor inferred, nor simply remembered; the object is rather presented as it is. In this complicated account of the perception of physical objects, the role of the *pramāṇas* is not so much to make the object manifest as to unconceal it. Consciousness as limited by the inner sense and as assuming the form of the object is called by the Advaitins a "*vṛtti*" (mental mode). The function of a mental mode is to unconceal the object by removing the veil of ignorance. Without *vṛtti* there cannot be the perception of an object. Thus, pure consciousness, which is of the nature of the *ātman* or of the *brahman,* cannot by itself perceive an external object. One needs the functioning of a psycho-physical organism in order that empirical objects may be directly perceived. So much about *anubhava* as *Erfahrung*.

It is quite different, however, with *anubhava* as *Erlebnis*. Here again the Advaita distinguishes between two different concepts: one of them applying to the above-mentioned *vṛtti* and the other applying to pure consciousness without any limitations. I will explain this point further. While the *vṛtti*—as a modification of the inner sense and as having an intentional object that is being perceived—plays the role of or has the function of removing the concealment of the object, the *vṛtti* itself does not require another *vṛtti* in order to be directly perceived. Were it so, there would have been an *infinite regress*. A *vṛtti,* while revealing its object, is also

immediately perceived without needing another *vṛtti*. This means that *Erlebnis*, as it occurs, is also immediately self-manifesting. There are no unperceived, unmanifested, or hidden *Erlebnisse*.

To say that a *vṛtti*, which is an *Erlebnis*, is self-manifesting is not quite accurate. The only thing that is self-manifesting in the strictest sense, on the Advaita view, is pure consciousness. All others, be they external objects or *Erlebnisse*, are manifested by that pure consciousness playing the role of what is called the "witness-consciousness" (*sākṣin*) in Advaita. The witness-consciousness manifests an external object only when there is an appropriate *vṛtti* to remove its concealment. But an *Erlebnis* or *vṛtti*, not having a concealment, is directly manifested by the witness-consciousness without needing another *vṛtti*. It is *kevalasākṣivedya*, i.e., "revealed by the witness-consciousness *alone*." Pure consciousness, however, is the only thing of which it can be said that it shows itself. It is neither an *Erfahrung* nor an *Erlebnis*; its self-awareness is beyond the distinction between subject and object.

So far, I have considered *Erlebnisse* that are cognitive. But there are also *Erlebnisse* that are affective, such as pleasure and pain. According to the general trend of Indian philosophy, these states in themselves are not intentional, which means that they do not in themselves have their own objects. They derive their objects from cognitive experience on which they are parasitic. The object about which one feels pleasure is first of all an object of knowledge and then gives rise to pleasure. Since the objects of pleasure and pain are already manifested to cognition, the Advaitins do not feel the need for recognizing a *vṛtti* in the case of pleasure and pain. Consequently, such experiences as pleasure and pain, like the cognitive *vṛttis*, have been taken to be self-manifesting. In other words, on the Advaitin account, there is no pleasure and no pain which is not immediately evident

to whoever has them. They are not concealed by ignorance and so do not require unconcealment. But their manifestation, like the manifestation of a cognitive *vṛtti,* is not in the strictest sense self-manifestation. The *vṛtti*s rather are manifested by the witness-consciousness directly.

With the above in mind, I will next present the technicalities of the Advaita theory of experience in its different aspects. The crucial statement here is the assertion that all *pramāṇas* culminate in *anubhava* or experience.[20] In this text in the context of distinguishing between the *brahman* and *dharma,* Śaṃkara states that the object of *anubhava* is *bhūtavastu,* i.e., the thing which is, not something which will be, or has to be brought into being. Additionally, as noted earlier, he reiterates on several occasions that the *brahman* is directly experienced in a *sākṣātkāra.* Śaṃkara's text that "all *pramāṇas* culminate in *anubhava*" may be interpreted in many ways.[21] It may mean that any *pramāṇa* gives rise to a true cognition, and a true cognition is an *anubhava* of its object, even inferential knowledge of the unperceived fire on a hill or a verbal knowledge, is also an *anubhava.* While this interpretation comes close to the Naiyāyika point of view referred earlier, it perhaps does not correctly represent the Advaita Vedānta perspective. *Anubhava,* in the narrow sense, argues Śaṃkara, is *aparokṣa jñāna,* meaning that this knowledge must be direct and immediate, i.e., it must be *sākṣātkāra.* Inference and *śabda* cannot amount to perceptions of their respective objects. Thus, Śaṃkara's statement that all *pramāṇas* culminate in *anubhava* must be taken to mean that all *pramāṇas* lead to *anubhava,* that their ultimate goal is reached when the object they are trying to determine and apprehend stands manifested in its existence and nature. In terms of the Advaitic epistemology, this takes place when the two kinds of superimpositions (*adhyāsas*)—one that conceals existence and the other that conceals the nature—are removed.[22] Since

the Advaitins subscribe to the theory of *pramāṇasaṃplava*, or the applicability of various *pramāṇas* to the same object; they all culminate in the *anubhava* of the object. In this sense, *anubhava* itself is not a *pramāṇa* (contrary to what some scholars have suggested),[23] but rather the final goal, the resting place, the consummation of all the *pramāṇas*.

The Advaitic theory of knowledge is custom tailored to suit its metaphysics. Since the underlying reality of all empirical phenomena is the *brahman* or pure consciousness (*cit*), every knowable object (*prameya*) is construed as consciousness limited by that object; a pitcher, for example, is "consciousness as limited by the pitcher." Likewise, a knower or a *pramātā*, that is an empirical person, like Devadatta, is really "consciousness as limited by Devadatta." The cognitive state that arises in Devadatta about the pitcher, in the same way becomes "pure consciousness limited by that cognitive state" (*vṛttyavacchinnacaitanya*). Thus, the purely empirical concepts of the knower, the object of knowledge, and the cognitive state are translated and transformed into a language adopted to fit the Advaitic metaphysics. In knowing an object, for the present overlooking many complicated details, there occurs an identity, which is only an identity of the form (*ākāra*) between these three things: "consciousness limited by the knower, consciousness limited by the cognitive state, and consciousness limited by the object, say, a pitcher." The thesis that every object is superimposed upon pure consciousness is not to say that, as some Western idealists would have it, it is an idea in the mind. On the contrary, Śaṃkara recognized that empirical objects do possess unknown existence which preserved the realism that he needed. To be superimposed upon consciousness does *not* mean that objects are *in* consciousness. On the contrary, they are extrinsic to pure consciousness. Thus, the Advaitins preserve realism, reject subjective idealism, and yet regard consciousness to be foundational to everything.

In order to understand the full complexity of the Advaita theory of experience, one must be able to appreciate the role that the concept of ignorance plays in it. This can be perspicuously stated in the following sentence: "Experience is an interplay of knowledge and ignorance." This sentence characterizes all forms of experience, excepting the pure, self-manifesting consciousness. Short of the final experience of the nature of the self, every other form of experience has some relation or other to ignorance. Several points need to be emphasized in this connection.

a) On the Advaita view, ignorance is not a mere absence of knowledge, it is a positive entity that conceals the object; it is removed when that object is known. The reasons why the Advaitins regard ignorance as a positive entity and not a mere absence of knowledge are too complex to detail here. For our purpose, following would suffice: if ignorance were absence of knowledge then knowing that I am ignorant of X would amount to my knowing that I do not have knowledge of X, and to know the latter (i.e., that I do not have knowledge of X) one needs to know what X is (in the same way as knowing the absence of an elephant implies knowing what an elephant is). In that case, one would know X and there would be no ignorance of X.

b) For the Advaita, ignorance is not only a positive entity; it is also beginningless, because to suppose that ignorance has a beginning would imply that prior to coming into being of ignorance one had knowledge; but knowledge can arise only *after* the removal of ignorance.

c) The locus (*āśraya*) and the object (*viṣaya*) of ignorance are the same, viz., consciousness. Consciousness alone can be the locus of ignorance because consciousness is the locus of knowledge, and

knowledge and ignorance must belong to the same subject if a knowledge has to destroy the ignorance. Likewise, the object of ignorance can only be that which, when ignorance is removed, can show itself, and only consciousness has the power of showing itself. When I say, "I am ignorant of X," this ignorance *really* conceals not the object X, but rather the consciousness limited by that object.

d) With regard to the unconcealment (compare with Heidegger's early idea of truth as *Unverborgenheit*) of an object of cognition, the Advaitins recognize a prior state of concealment by ignorance—prior to its unconcealment. But there is no ignorance of ignorance, because in that case there would ensue a vicious *infinite regress*. The Advaitin therefore admits that ignorance, like the cognitive states, and also like pleasure and pain, does not have an unknown existence. It is directly perceived or manifested by the witness-consciousness as is evidenced by the statement "I am ignorant."

If we remember these different aspects of Advaita theory of ignorance, then we will be able to understand that both consciousness and ignorance being beginningless, their relation is also beginningless. There are two modalities of consciousness: consciousness as knowledge and consciousness as ignorance. Anything whatsoever is an object of consciousness either as object of knowledge or as object of ignorance: When anything is an object of knowledge, that knowledge carries with it the implication that it *was* unknown before; when anything is an object of ignorance, such ignorance carries with it the implication that when this ignorance is removed, the object *will be* known in the future. And when it is known *now* in one respect, it may still be an object of ignorance in another

aspect or in another respect. This shows that all mundane experience is an interplay of knowledge and ignorance, both being manifested by consciousness and their interplay referring to the three dimensions of time, past, present, and future.

Now it is easy to see how in the Advaitic discourse the empirical and the transcendental blend together. A cognitive state assumes the form of the object and succeeds in destroying the ignorance that concealed it prior to its being known. The result (again speaking of a result in a pickwickean sense) is the manifestation of the object. The Advaitins argue that when an object is cognized the object is indeed manifested; however, the object is not the only thing that is manifested—cognition of an object is accompanied by an immediate self-awareness of the cognition. They call this continuous principle of self-awareness *sākṣin* (witness-consciousness),[24] which is not only consciousness of knowing an object, but also consciousness of not-knowing the object. Thus, in the perception of a pitcher, the pitcher is not the only thing that is manifested, the cognitive state whose object is the pitcher is also manifested. Thus, to say that there is an *anubhava* of the pitcher (*ghaṭānubhava*) may mean either of two different things: it may mean that a cognitive state of which I am the owner and whose object is the pitcher occurs and as it occurs I become aware of it. Or, it may mean that my consciousness of my cognitive state is self-manifested. In the former case, the cognitive state is manifested to witness-consciousness; in the latter case, the consciousness manifests itself (in the strictest sense). Actually the idea of *anubhava* includes both the meanings. Of these two meanings, the second is purely transcendental, while the first is a blending of the transcendental and the empirical inasmuch as a cognitive state is an empirical event or process.

Given this account of *anubhava*, one may perhaps wonder why, and, in what sense, one can speak of the *anubhava* of a pitcher? The reply is: the pitcher is the object of a cognitive state, which has acquired the form of the pitcher by coming in contact with it, and, as a result, the unknown character of that pitcher is removed. So although *anubhava* in the mixed sense (empirical-transcendental) is the awareness of the cognitive state, the cognitive state being of the form of the object, the pitcher in this case is also manifested. That is why the locution "*ghaṭānubhava*" is justified. But strictly speaking we have an experience, not of the pitcher, not of the cognitive state, but of the self-shining consciousness. Both the cognitive state and the pitcher, whose form the cognitive state has assumed, are also manifested with the removal of ignorance. Now we begin to realize the subtle nature of the idea of *anubhava* when one speaks of *ghaṭānubhava* and *brahmānubhava*. What we have is not an experience of something, of an object in the literal sense; it is a self-awareness of consciousness in which the identification of two empirical phenomena (the cognitive state and a pitcher) is reflected; however, in the final analysis, what we have is the *anubhava* or experience of consciousness. I must, however, add that the locution "reflection" must be correctly understood. Since on the Advaita account, the empirical phenomena, i.e., neither the cognitive state nor the object, say, a pitcher, nor their identity, can *really* belong to consciousness, they are manifested by consciousness by appearing to be its contents in the same way as the real moon is not part of the water in which it is reflected.

It is important to remember in this context that while there is a sense in which one can speak of the *anubhava* of a finite external object, the Advaitins are primarily interested in the metaphysical reality called the *brahman*. Hence the recurrent talk in the Advaita literature of *brahmānubhava*.

The nature and existence of the *brahman* is determined perceptually in a *nirvikalpaka* perception of mere existence (*sanmātragrāhi*), inferential cognition that the world arises from such an omnipresent reality, and the scriptural cognition arising from understanding the meaning of such texts such as "I am *brahman*" (*ahaṃ brahmāsmi*), strengthened by a critical and philosophical reflection in its support, and ultimately leading to a perceptual or immediate *anubhava* of the object of the statements of the Upaniṣads.

In the case of *ghaṭānubhava* there is still a remnant, as though a shadow, of an intentional relation between the knower and the known; hence, the locution "*ghaṭānubhava*" (the experience of a pitcher) is different from "*ghaṭa-pratyakṣa*" (the perception of a pitcher). In the latter case there is a clear subject/object distinction. Here various *pramāṇas* may converge on manifesting in a perceptual encounter, substantiated and strengthened by inference and *śabda*, that the thing in front of us is a pitcher made from the clay of the sacred river Ganges. In the former case we only have a shadow of that distinction. It is possible to speak of *ghaṭānubhava*, i.e., the *anubbava* of the pitcher in front of me from a purely formal point of view. In talking about *brahmānubhava*, however, even that shadow of the distinction is gone, because the *brahman*, unlike a pitcher, is not even a possible object. But Advaitins do not speak of it in the context of their discussions of *anubhava*, because it is not their primary interest; their interest revolves around the *brahman*. The idea of *anubhava* in the Advaitic discourse really entails a direct self-awareness free from any subject/object distinction and if *anubhava* is qualified by the name of an object, such as *ghaṭa*, it only shows how the transcendental discourse is corrupted by the empirical. The philosophical wisdom then consists in recognizing the corruption and sharpening our understanding so that it is not misled by it. *Anubhava* is not a *pramāṇa*, because a

pramāṇa always implies a subject/object distinction. *Anubhava* is the culmination of the *pramāṇas*. In the final analysis it is self-knowledge (*brahmānubhava*) toward which all knowledge is construed as moving.

III

In What Sense is *Brahmānubhava* an *Anubhava*?

So far we have seen that the Advaitin concept of "*anubhava*" or experience fundamentally means any direct, unmediated, immediate, knowledge of an object. It is contrasted not only with memory, but also with inference, verbal testimony, and *pramāṇa*s other than perception. Since the adjectives "direct" and "unmediated" have no fixed meaning, there are many different levels of experience beginning with outer perception and culminating in the final immediate experience of the identity of the *ātman* and the *brahman*. In between these two extremes, there are inner perceptions of the cognitive states by the witness-consciousness, immediate awareness of pleasure/pain without intervention of any cognitive mode, immediate perception of one's own ignorance, and immediate self-awareness of the witness-consciousness. Strictly speaking, only the *brahman*-experience is unmediated.

To analyze the concept of "*brahmānubhava*," I will rely on Śaṃkara's text "*Aparokṣānubhūti*." The title means "unmediated experience." Vimuktānanda translates it as "Self-Realization";[25] the word "self" is clearly imported and "realization" is not a literal translation. It is so rendered owing to the fact that in this experience, *ātman,* which was misunderstood up until now, is manifested as it is, and consequently, one "realizes" that the self is not what it was earlier mistaken to be.

The knowledge that is aimed at is described as follows in the words that articulate the experience of the wise:

I am the *brahman*, equanimous, quiescent; of the nature of pure existence, consciousness, and bliss: I am not the body. I am without change, without form, free from blemish and decay. I am not the body. . . . I am not subject to any disease, I am not to be comprehended in any thought. I am free from any conceptual alternation. I am all pervading. I am without any attribute or activity. I am free, eternal, and imperishable. I am free from all impurity. I am unmoving, unlimited, pure, undecaying, and immortal.[26]

The experience is but the articulation of the nature of the *ātman* as manifested once the ignorance concealing it is removed. It does not describe an *object* of knowledge, but the subject and the object being non-different, what is described is the experience, the *anubhūti*, itself. Clearly, the "I" is elliptical, referring both to the *ātman* and to the person's apparent individuality.

The different steps (15 steps) leading to this experience are listed a little later,[27] each step before the final experience requiring constant practice. These steps are: the control of the senses, control of the mind, renunciation, silence, space,[28] time,[29] posture, the restraining root, the equipoise of the body, the firmness of vision, the control of the vital forces, withdrawal of the mind, concentration and self-contemplation, and complete self-absorption.[30]

There is no need to go into the details of these *yogic* steps. For our purposes it is sufficient to note that the experience results from a long preparation. The distinction between the subject and the object is gradually narrowed. With their identity coming to the fore, one has what may be called *"experience"—experience* by consciousness of its own nature, the final experience of the non-difference of the *ātman* and the *brahman*, which is a special kind of *aparokṣānubhūti*. It is different from the immediate experience that is generated by the process outlined in the *Yogasūtras*, where the meditator and the object of meditation

are totally fused, mental modifications are checked (*niruddha*), though the latent impressions might continue.[31] The goal is *kaivalya*, freedom of *puruṣa* from *prakṛti*. Advaita experience, on the other hand, is an immediate or "intuitive" experience which is brought about by understanding the meanings of the sentences of the Upaniṣads, e.g., "*tat tvam asi*," "*so'ham*," and by reflection and meditation on the import of these sentences.

When *brahmānubhava* is rendered as "intuition" of the *brahman*, and interpreted as an intuitive experience, there is much more loaded into it than the Advaita Vedānta would allow. It is plausible to speak of intuition in the context of *Yogasūtras* or even of Rāmānuja's Viśiṣṭādvaita. Rāmānuja writes that through undisturbed, uninterrupted flow of contemplation of the *brahman* or God, there arises an intuition.[32] Here the *brahman* is the God of the theists and focusing one's attention on him continuously without interruption may result in a sort of givenness of the object of contemplation. But the *brahman* of Advaita Vedānta is not a possible object of intuition. With this brief remark to warn against a frequent misinterpretation, let me return to the two usages: *brahmaviṣayakānubhava* and *brahmasvarūpānubhava*. In the former there is still a cognitive process or *vṛtti*, which arises from reflection and meditation on such identity statements as "I am he," the *vṛtti* takes the form of an identity; which in Advaita Vedānta epistemology is called "*akhaṇḍākāra vṛtti*."[33] When such a cognitive state comes into being all illusions of difference, specifically the difference between the individual self and the *brahman* disappear, the ignorance concealing the nature of the pure identity is removed and the *brahman* shines by its own light. Thus, *brahmaviṣayakānubhava* is replaced by *brahmasvarūpānubhava*, since in the latter no cognitive process or state mediates; it is called "*aprokṣānubhūti*" or an "unmediated *brahman* experience."

It is worth remembering that this mediation, viz., the process of *śravaṇa* (hearing), *manana* (analytic consideration), *nididhyāsana* (contemplation), does not bring about the final self-realization or manifestation of pure consciousness. It leads to the destruction of the primal ignorance which not only accounts for the sense of difference between the self and the *brahman*, but also the sense of difference among many finite selves. When concealment is removed, consciousness shines forth. Thus, it is not surprising that this immediate knowledge in Advaita literature is called "*śabdajanyāparokṣa jñāna*," meaning thereby that immediate knowledge which can arise through a sensory experience, in this case, hearing, and has been elucidated on the analogy of the verbal instruction "you are the tenth person." Once, ten young men were traveling together. On their way, they came across a brook, which had overflowed its banks because of the recent monsoon rain. They had never seen such an expanse of water because in their village one could get water only from the wells. After considerable debate, they decided to wade through the water. Despite slipping many times, they reached the other side of the brook. They were tired and exhausted. To make sure that all of them had crossed the brook safely, one of the young men counted the number in the party, leaving himself out. He cried and said; "where is the tenth one?" Each repeated the counting, leaving himself out. They started crying. A passerby saw their distress and inquired "what has happened?" The young travelers informed him that the tenth person died while crossing the brook. The passerby realized what had happened and said to each one of them: "you are the tenth man," "you are the tenth man." Thus, according to Vivaraṇa, words have the capacity to produce immediate knowledge. When an enquirer goes to a teacher and asks about the self, the teacher tells him "thou art that." When the student asks, "What is the *brahman*?"

The teacher says, "you are that," "you are he." Therefore, this is what the student hears from the teacher. It is *śabda jñāna*, i.e., "knowledge by words."[34] What is needed is that he not only hear it, but that he is able to verify it in his own experience. That means that he needs *śabdajanyāparokṣajñāna*, i.e., immediate cognition produced by words, which is a direct verification from his own experience of what he has been told. This verification results in "I am that " or "I am the *brahman*," which fulfills and confirms the intention of the other statement, "thou art that." The first statement tells one verbally the truth; the second is the expression of the direct confirmation in one's own case that it is the truth.

The process reminds one of the Hegelian dialectical process that leads to the unfoldment of the spirit. Hegel notes: "*Inasmuch as the new true object issues from it,* this *dialectical* movement which consciousness exercises on itself and which affects both its knowledge and its object, is precisely what is called experience [*Erfahrung*].[35] Using now the Hegelian sense of experience, one could say that not only each of these intervening stages (*vṛtti,* etc.) is an experience, but there is also a new experience at each stage, the experience of transition that the Advaitins do not explicitly talk about.

Let us take a few minutes to determine in what sense "*brahmānubhava*" can be called an experience. Since the word "*anubhava*" occurs in "*brahmānubhava*," it appears to be unquestionable that it is an experience—an experience of the *brahman,* or perhaps, better still, of the non-difference of the *ātman* and the *brahman*. However, even if this is so, there are various questions that can be asked about it. First, is it *Erfahrung* or *Erlebnis*? An *Erfahrung* is of an object, and accordingly, implies a distinction between the subject and the object, i.e., one who experiences and that which is experienced. On the Advaita view, the distinction is

certainly not true of the highest experience, i.e., the *brahmānubhava*. Is it then an *Erlebnis*? As I perceive the yonder tree, the perception is an *Erfahrung*, but the act of so perceiving is directly manifested to me by my witness-consciousness ("I am perceiving that tree") and my witness-consciousness also manifests itself. In Advaita, a cognitive state as it is directed toward an object is being manifested by the witness-consciousness, while the witness-consciousness also manifests itself. The latter two, i.e., cognitive state and witness-consciousness, on the Advaita view, are *Erlebnisse*. Thus, the *Erlebnis* so defined attaches to or accompanies an *Erfahrung*. In the absence of a cognitive state, there is no *Erlebnis*. Pure consciousness or *śuddha caitanya* of Advaita Vedānta, which is of the nature of *ātman* and *brahman*, functions as a witness-consciousness *only in the context of an Erfahrung*. Thus, we begin to see that the two forms of experience, that is, *Erfahrung* and *Erlebnis*, by their very opposition are also internally constitutive of each other. Without *Erlebnis* there would be no *Erfahrung*, and without *Erfahrung* there would be no *Erlebnis*. This, if true, would imply that *brahmānubhava* is not an *Erlebnis* either, because that experience by definition would involve the dissolution of the subject/object distinction, that is to say, of all *Erfahrung*.

In what sense then *brahmānubhava* is an *experience*? There is not much one can say about it, nevertheless, I will try to draw attention to several features of it.

In the first place, with the dissolution of the sense of I, *brahmānubhava* cannot have the linguistic form "I am experiencing the *brahman*." It is not meant to be a subjective cognition of an objective reality. When the cognition of the *brahman*, or of the identity of the *ātman-brahman*, arises, it is still a *vṛtti* and it leads to the dissolution of primal ignorance—after which the *brahman* manifests itself. *Brahmānubhava* then at its culmination is not a wise person's

cognition of the *brahman*, but the *brahman* fully unconcealed. To call it an "experience" is to introduce into that phenomenon a tinge of subjectivity that had already been dissolved. The point, which I am trying to make here, was very powerfully made by Heidegger, when he warned us against taking Being as an experience.[36] However much one refines the term "experience," it unavoidably has a tinge of subjectivity. Nevertheless, there remains a paradox that Advaitins must face: *brahmānubhava* must be of someone; if it is of Ramaṇa Mahrshi, it is not mine. If *brahmānubhava* is simply the self-manifestation of the *brahman*, then that self-manifestation will always be there. But there is a special sense in which when a wise person has *brahmānubhava*, his ignorance is dissolved though the ignorances of other individuals continues and the *brahman* is manifested in its eternally self-manifesting nature *to him or to her* but not to others. With the total dissolution of mundaneity, an Advaitin has great difficulty explaining "to him" or "to her." In a sense, *brahmānubhava* is an *Erlebnis* of someone; it is eternally self-manifesting *brahman* now manifesting to someone, but this clause "to someone" is not an additional restriction or limitation (*upādhi*)[37] on the self-manifesting *brahman*, but only a contingent accident (*upalakṣaṇa*).[38]

If the *brahmānubhava* is construed as the experience of the identity of the *ātman* and the *brahman*, then we encounter another aspect of the problem. This problem concerns the nature of identity and we must confront the following question: under what circumstances one asserts an identity or even an experience of identity? Is there an experience whose linguistic articulation assumes the form "this is the same as that"? The attendant problems are well known in Western philosophy, as formulated, for example, by Frege,[39] in his distinction between the morning star and the evening star. Can we assert that two different things are identical? Or, is it the case that the same thing is identical with itself?

Insofar as a statement of identity presupposes a prior appearance of difference, which is now being negated, this assertion of identity must be an accomplishment of reason, rather than being a consequence of the thing manifesting itself. A rational examination by the various *pramāṇas*, including the *śruti*, may lead to the negation of seeming differences between the *ātman* and the *brahman*, and establish an identity between what seemed to be different. Compare the case of the morning star and the evening star. But this recovery of identity, first of all, requires a rational examination by the *pramāṇas* (the activity of reason), and secondly, it does not totally eliminate all appearances of difference; some sense of difference still persists. The star first seen in the morning and the star first seen in the evening are still different phenomena; Devadatta seen in Pātliputra ten years ago and Devadatta seen *now* here in Vārāṇasi, inspite of their identity now discovered, still present phenomenal differences.

So far, in this exposition of the Advaita Vedānta idea of experience I have focused on that idea from an epistemological perspective. However, Advaita Vedānta literature on *brahmānubhava*, and I suppose any *anubhava* to some degree, has an affective tone. Again, one may begin with the metaphysical position or with a phenomenology. From a metaphysical perspective, Advaita Vedānta believes that the *brahman* is not only pure being and pure consciousness, but also pure unlimited *ānanda*.[40] But given the idea that a cognition manifests an object by removing the ignorance that conceals it seems to imply for the Advaita Vedānta that such manifestation must always be of the nature of *ānanda* in whatever obscure measure—a thesis that is grounded not only metaphysically, but also psychologically. At the basis there is a large framework dominating Hindu perception of things, the conception of the three *guṇas*. The *sattva guṇa* is manifested in *prakāṣa* or

manifestation and also in *ānanda*, but with a certain lightness. Some of these are no doubt metaphysical notions, but one must not discard them for that reason. Where literal speech fails, metaphors help and point to an inexpressible depth of experience. The manifestation of an object, the attendant removal of a dark concealment, symbolizes a victory of light over darkness, of *sattva* over *tamas*, through a process that is *rajas*. This victory, metaphorically so-called, brings lightness and also *ānanda*. Knowledge then on the Advaita Vedānta view brings not power but joy. Does this point of view, promise a fruitful phenomenology of knowledge? To my knowledge, none has been attempted. What I have suggested here is a possible sketch. The pure cognition, the pure knowledge of the truth of things, severed from any emotional explication is *not* Advaitic.

Finally, the question must be asked: if *brahmānubhava* is an *anubhava* of that identity, of the *ātman* and the *brahman*, can this identity be asserted after the complete dissolution of phenomenal differences? The point that I am trying to make is as follows: in this concept of experiencing an identity, there is inevitably a trace of the already superseded experience of difference and a rational critique of that difference. It cannot be a case of pure experience of identity. Again, we confront in a different way, following a different route, the truth that Advaitic experience and Advaitic reason mutually implicate each other. Now we begin to see that experience and reason as they have been construed in classical Western philosophy, i.e., as faculties of knowledge, or even as sources of knowledge, or as abilities that the human mind possesses, are not applicable to Indian philosophy, in this case to Advaita Vedānta. "Reason" and "experience" are inseparably intertwined—nay, two aspects of the same cognitive process contingent upon the context. It is reason when the process of experience is used or taken to be a critical examination (*parīkṣā*) of any putative object

or epistemic claim Any cognitive activity is both empirical and rational; empirical insofar as an object or a reality is presented; it is rational insofar as this presentation is examined, justified, and critiqued in the ascent to a higher level. Once one removes the trace of reason, the talk about the possibility of experience is also removed. Both the terms "experience" and "reason" are unavoidably tinged with subjectivity.

IV

Concluding Reflections

The above Advaita account reminds me of the views expressed in the *Nikāyas*, where the Buddha uses "knowing-seeing" (*jāñāti* and *passati*) together. Therefore, in this section, I will make some remarks by way of comparing the Buddha and Śaṃkara. Śaṃkara's sayings, as did those of the Buddha's, left room for various interpretations and many different schools sprung up based on their inspirational teachings. I will begin by comparing the Buddha and Śaṃkara, and conclude the chapter with a few comparative remarks about Advaita, Nyāya, and Buddhist philosophies with regard to the nature and role of the *pramāṇas*, especially perception.

(i) Both the Buddha and Śaṃkara employ reason and experience as a means of knowing. Neither takes "*tarka*" to be mere sophistry and skepticism. Both argue that logical reasoning consists in ruling out contradictions and lack of internal inconsistencies alone does not guarantee truth. The Buddha emphasizes that a logical argument well argued may be false or true; contrariwise, an ill-argued argument may still be true. Śaṃkara makes the same point when he says that for every *tarka* one can advance a counter-*tarka* and this process can go on *ad infinitum*. For example, Kapila (Sāṃkhya), employing reasoning establishes the origin of

the universe from *prakṛti* and Kaṇāda (Vaiśeṣika) from atoms, usually with equally cogent arguments. Under such circumstances, Śaṃkara finds a definite refuge in *śruti*, not challenged by either of the two participants; however, the words of *śruti* must be understood and reflected upon to yield the final experience. The Buddha did not have *śruti* to fall back upon.

Tarka does not guarantee truth according to the Buddha in the *Nikāyas*, because any kind of truth, empirical or non-empirical, has to be *seen* which means that any cognitive claim has to be validated by seeing. Śaṃkara restricts the validity of the operation of logical reasoning to empirical matters, but with regard to transcendental questions falls back on *śruti* and correct interpretations of the text. In this sense, Śaṃkara may seem to fall under the group classified as "Vedicists." However, we must not lose sight of the fact that for Śaṃkara mere *śravaṇa*, i.e., hearing of the great sayings, must be followed by *manana* (reflective thinking on one's own), and *nididhyāsana* (meditative contemplation) leading to the direct experience of *brahman sākṣātkāra*. This shows that if Śaṃkara is a Vedicist in the Buddha's sense, he also becomes a personal-experientialist in the sense found in the *Nikāyas* and the distance between the two seems lesser than it originally seemed to be. This claim is borne out if we recall the process of "knowing-seeing," which is the goal of the Buddha's efforts.[41] Reaching the goal requires *samādhi* (contemplation), removal of impediments including passions. Śaṃkara makes the same point in his introduction to *BSBh*. He lists several qualifications for even having the desire to know the *brahman*, e.g., control of the mind and the senses, development of such qualities as patience, power of concentration, and detachment.[42]

Neither the Buddha nor Śaṃkara would permit a literal use of the expression "my *nirvāṇa*," "my *mokṣa*" respectively, because in both cases, the sense of "I" is dissolved and the

person who has attained freedom cannot literally refer to himself as an "I." "*Nirvāṇa*" gives us knowledge of things as they are; it consists in knowing what exists as "existing" and what does not exist as "not existing." On the other hand, when the Advaitins hold the view that in the culminating knowledge one knows the truth about the self, what one indeed knows is the universality of the spirit in all beings and not the self of an individual person as it is commonly understood.

Śaṃkara emphasizes that the *pramāṇas* culminate in *anubhava*. For Śaṃkara the culminating knowledge is knowledge of the identity of the *ātman-brahman*, however, "knowing-seeing" of the Buddha in no sense involves an identity of the subject and the object. Culminating knowledge or "knowing-seeing" is different from the knower. We know that such phenomenologists as Husserl, emphasize the intuitive nature of knowing philosophical truths, and here I cannot help but recall the Platonic conception that the highest knowledge is a seeing or vision of the highest idea, i.e., the idea of the Good. I do not like to call this intuitive knowledge "extrasensory perception" in view of the association of this term with psychological experimentations. The enormous moral and spiritual preparation and *yogic* practices, which precede such achievements, are thereby lost sight of. I may also add here that the Buddha most probably was a *yogin* of some kind and his moral recommendations are not far from what one finds in the *Yogasūtras* of Patañjali. Śaṃkara, on the other hand, was not simply a Vedicist but also, in the language of the Pali *Nikāyas*, a personal-experientialist, according to whom the final truth is experienced. Notwithstanding these impressive similarities between the two, there are also important differences in their conceptions of reason and experience,

(ii) Perception plays an important role in all systems of Indian philosophy and a distinction is generally made between non-conceptual (*nirvikalpaka*) and conceptual (*savikalpaka*) perceptions. The former is the mere apprehension of the bare form of the object (*nirvikalpaka*): it is not linguistic; it is non-relational, undifferentiated, and not expressed in predicative judgments. The latter, on the other hand, is linguistic, relational, differentiated, and contains assimilation, analysis and synthesis (*savikalpaka*). One might say that non-conceptual perception is experience in a more appropriate sense, if the word "experience" means an immediate, non-conceptual, knowledge of an object. Though most systems do recognize this distinction, there is a wide difference of opinion regarding their exact nature.

According to Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, what is given in any perception is a cognition of concrete individuals, a unity of particulars and universals, substance and qualities. The distinction between non-conceptual and conceptual perception does not depend on the content but rather on how given contents are arranged and organized. The given contents, initially unrelated, are subsequently related in the appropriate manner to constitute *savikalpaka* perception, expressed in a perceptual judgment. Thus, what are unrelated and unorganized in non-conceptual perceptions become related in conceptual perceptions. Accordingly, the Naiyāyikas hold (1) universals are apprehended even in the non-linguistic perception, and (2) *savikalpaka* perception remains a perception though it is also a judgment.

On a Western view, to be found in Kant, judgment is the work of the intellect and is the result of combining the data of sensibility with concepts. Thus, perceptual judgment on the Kantian view is an act of thinking. There is no such conception of thinking in Indian epistemologies, especially in the Nyāya account. For the Naiyāyikas—perception while

remaining perception and while also kneading together elements that were already presented (including universals) into a relational whole—does not contain any function of thought. How precisely language enters into the structure of perception still remains a difficult question.

Two additional views in this regard are those of Advaita Vedānta and Buddhists, which, however, are very different.

On the view of Advaita Vedānta, what is given in a non-conceptual perception, occurring at the very first moment of sensory contact, is simple existence ("this"), the knowledge of pure being, not determined by anything. It is cognition of pure indeterminate being, which is later determined as such-and-such, e.g., it is then conceptualized as either a "cow," or a "horse," or a "picture," or as whatever else it might be. This amounts to saying that, at the first moment of perception, our experience is undifferentiated, thought—if we can speak of thought at all—introduces distinctions into it, and makes it a determinate reality, e.g., a cow, a horse, a table, a chair, and so on.

Another view, which in some regard is very much like the Advaita view but in other regard very different, is that of the Buddhists. According to the Buddhists, non-conceptual perception, which truly is perception in the strict sense, is cognition of an object without any intervention of names and universals, etc. On this account, only the "this," the bare particular, is experienced, but we tend to apply universal features and names and transform that experience into a judgment assuming the form "this is a cow," "this is a horse," "this is a picture," etc. The Advaita Vedānta's bare existence (*sanmātra*), on the other hand, is not a particular; it is rather a universal that runs through all entities without distinguishing one from the other; it is the same in all. The Buddhists bare particular, on the other hand, is ever different, no two are alike, unless one brings them under a

universal. It is to be noted that for an Advaitin and a Buddhist who in the final analysis are spiritual philosophers,[43] the non-conceptual perception provides within ordinary experience the closest anticipation of what may be called "spiritual experience"; in one case, experience of the *brahman* (*brahmānubhava*) and in the other of *nirvāṇa*. This is indeed different from the Western thought, for example, from Kant, who argues that experience is purely sensory experience, without any spiritual experience. Empirical knowledge is contrasted with moral and religious faith. For the Buddhists as well as the Advaitins, irrespective of the idea of experience they might subscribe to in the mundane context, experience provides an anticipation of the highest experience in the spiritual sense.

(iii) For the Naiyāyikas, "*anubhava*" is synonymous with "*pramājñāna* "(true cognition). Even when one knows something inferentially or knows something by *śabda*, i.e., by understanding the meaning of a sentence uttered by a reliable speaker, one is having an *anubhava*. Accordingly, any *pramā*, irrespective of the *pramāṇa* that brings it about, is an *anubhava*. The distinction between immediate and mediate knowledge does not determine whether a cognition is an *anubhava*. In Advaita Vedānta only an immediate cognition is called "*anubhava*." Śaṃkara's crucial text in this context is "all *pramāṇas* culminate in and find their fulfillment in (what is being called) *anubhava*."[44] "*Anubhava*" etymologically means "that which arises (*bhava*) after (*anu*) (the object)." It is that which follows the object that is being known; it is the experience in which an object is manifested or presented as it is. Thus, when Śaṃkara says that all *pramāṇas* culminate in *anubhava*, it should be taken to mean that while all *pramāṇas* do not by themselves produce *anubhava*, they all culminate in an immediate seeing of the object. In other words, the *anubhava*, which is the

culmination of all *pramāṇas,* is not itself another *pramāṇa;* it is manifestation of the object once the *pramāṇas* succeed in removing the veil of ignorance. Therefore, it seems that there is an important difference between the Nyāya and Advaita understandings of *anubhava*. The term "experience" carries with it the sense of perceptuality. Inference and *śabda* as such are not perceptual and can only be understood as leading to *anubhava,* which is a different position than the Nyāya view that a valid inference itself is *anubhava.* The reason for the difference is that the Naiyāyikas construe each cognition to manifest its object. The inference of the unperceived fire on a distant mountain on the basis of perceived smoke is manifestation not of that fire in its particularity because I do not see the fire but only in its generic features (*vahnittvāvachhinna vahni*) and as being pervaded by smoke, which explains why the Naiyāyikas regard inference also as *anubhava*. The Advaitins and the Buddha however take *anubhava* to be perceptual both in the ordinary or the empirical case and in the non-empirical case, because they expect *anubhava* to manifest its object not merely in its generic feature but also in its uniqueness.

(iv) The Nyāya admits a principle "whatever exists is knowable" but not necessarily knowable by sensory perception unless one includes under perception God's perception. Given that the Nyāya ontology requires modes of knowing which are beyond sensory perception, it is not surprising to note that it goes beyond a pure empiricistic epistemology. It admits universals, such spiritual substances as soul, a relation called *samavāya* which behaves like a universal because it is identically one in all cases of its exemplifications, and an entity called particularity (*viśeṣa*) which belongs to partless substances, most of which, e.g., atoms, are not perceptible.

The Buddhists, on the other hand, try to match their ontology to a purely empiricist ontology. They deny universals, permanent substances, and any relation with the exception of causality understood as invariable succession and resemblance. In searching for the concept of "experience" in Buddhism, if one is looking for pure experience without any admixture of mental constructions, then one must look to the Buddhist theory of *nirvikalpaka* perception. In this kind of perception, the object is barely given without any association with names and universal classes. Its object is the pure particular, which is its own nature (*svalakṣaṇa*). Given that this kind of perception can only be produced by an object and the object does not contain name, class character, etc., pure perception cannot include any mention of name or class. Its object is not an enduring substance; it is different every instant. Experience in this primitive sense is ineffable, contains no subject object dualism, and is in a constant process of change. It is to be sharply kept apart from perception, which is linguistically articulated containing names and class characters of whatever is known. This kind of perception on the Buddhist view is a mental construction and lacks ontological truth. Its only truth consists in causal efficacy and practical success.

Again, on the Nyāya view, all things have names. Everything that exists can be named. In other words, existence, nameability, and knowability are coextensive. Thinking is always about things in the world. Universal features, which language and thinking ascribe to things, are real universals, are as much perceivable as are particulars. Since everything is ideally perceivable, its empiricism and conceptual realism coincide. In Buddhism, the matter is altogether different. Reality consists of instantaneous events, events that we experience. Language has no power of referring to or naming reality. Concepts are mental

constructs. Thinking moves one away from experiencing with no access back to reality. The only function that language serves is to say what a thing is not (*apoha*), not what it is. Meaning is not reference, but *apoha* or exclusion. What passes for truth within linguistic discourse is not truth but that which is practically useful. The world described by language is a mental construction, at most useful but with no ontological validity. Thought takes off from experience, but can never return to it. In order to know reality, one has to experience it and for that purpose, one need to empty the mind of all concepts, i.e., free it from the clutches of language. It is worth noting that the Buddhist account of experience and a contrast between pure experience and experience that is made by mental constructions is common to different schools of Buddhism. Dignāga's view that true perception must be free from language and all conceptual constructions is opposed to that of Bhartṛhari who forcefully argued that all cognition is interpenetrated by language. The Naiyāyikas, like Vedānta and Mīmāṃṣā, reconciled these two views by arguing that perception at its inception is non-linguistic and non-conceptual, but becomes linguistic, conceptual, and judgmental subsequently.

In light of what I have said so far about reason and experience in Indian philosophy, we can formulate the following propositions as being true of the entire Indian philosophy in general:

1. Reason as an independent source of knowledge of truths is really to be regarded as pseudo-reason (*nyāyābhāsa*). When reason operates in the form of valid inferences and interpretations of the texts, when rather than dogmatically cultivating beliefs it seeks to verify the rational conclusions by experience, then it is genuine and indispensable to determining truth;

2. The final determination of truth comes through experience looking back from the accomplished goal to the process leading up to it. Thus, the function of reason may seem to be negative, i.e., it consists in the preparation to receive experience in its unadulterated form;
3. Reason, as it was elaborated in all *darśanas* including Buddhism, becomes a theory of *pramāṇa* as the different means of knowing. This theory of *pramāṇas* was critically established by the *pramāṇas* themselves because there was no other way of establishing the truth of the *pramāṇas*. In this critical project philosophical thinking attained a self-conscious maturity which must not be lost sight of; and
4. When we view the entire process of culminating knowledge beginning with *jijñāsā* and ending with the knowledge of the truth, we find that reason and experience form one continuous process. *Śabda* or *śruti* is not revealed truth but rather one of the *pramāṇas*, and using *śabda pramāṇa* is part of a rational inquiry, which is preceded by justification of *śabda* as a valid *pramāṇa* and succeeded by the final emanicipatory experience.

I would like to conclude by returning to the remark (that there is no concept of "reason" in Indian thought) made to me by a Heideggerian friend on the topic of reason in Indian thought. My response to him would be as follows: It is indeed true that Indian philosophy lacks the large metaphysical concept of reason, i.e., *Vernunft* or *Logos* or *nous*, associated with the Judeo-Christian theology. However, my concern in this work has not been with reason with a capital R, but with the activity of reasoning, rationally critiquing theories and beliefs, as a step towards

determination of truth. The large metaphysical concept of reason led to reason as a faculty in humans with its own *a priori* principles and ideas, which, according to rationalists, Descartes and Kant, is the source of *a priori* knowledge. Indian thought did not proceed in this direction, and it is doubtful whether it has the concept of "*a priori*" knowledge. In the list of *pramāṇas*, there is no *pramāṇa* that could be said to be the equivalent of Reason. Additionally, the *pramāṇas* are not *sources* of knowledge; they rather are the instruments in the production of knowledge as well as the ways of justifying cognitive claims. My conclusion therefore is that the concept of "reason" is to be found in Indian thought in The Buddha, in a very early period in "Nāgārjuna's critique" of metaphysical categories, in the development of the theory of Nyāya syllogism in the *Nyāya sūtras*, and in the large *pramāṇa* theories in Śaṃkara's Advaita Vedānta. The only faculty, when the language of faculty was used, is possibly *buddhi*, and the only possible hint of the grounding of *buddhi* is in the Sāṃkhya notion of *mahat* as the first evolute of *prakṛti*.

As regard experience, with reason becoming a process, an activity, experience too had to be construed differently. As a means of knowing, it is no more as in the West, the passive reception of sensory data, Humean impressions, or Kantian representations, but always a process of knowing physical objects by perception and knowing-seeing the supernormal truths through meditation and realization of the identity of *ātman-brahman*. Conceived in this wide ranging sense, one may venture to suggest, as I have done, that reason and experience in Indian thought form rather a continuous process of human search for truth.

Endnotes

1. Keśava Miśra, *Tarkabhāṣā*, (tr.) Badrinath Śukla (New Dehi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1996), pp. 16–17.
2. *CU*, 6.7.3
3. *CU*, 6.7.6
4. *CU*, 7.3.1
5. *Muṇḍaka* 1.2.10.
6. *Praśna* 4.5.
7. *Praśna* 5.4.
8. Ibid., 5.3.
9. Ibid., 5.4.
10. *BSBh* 1.1.2.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid., 2.1.4.
13. Ibid., 2.2.25.
14. Ibid., 3.3.35-36.
15. Ibid., 4.1.2.
16. Ibid., 4.1.2.
17. Ibid., 3.4.15.
18. Ibid., 4.1.2.
19. Dharmarājādhvarīndra, *Vedānta Paribhāṣā* (*pratyakṣapramā tv atra caitanyameva, 'yat sākṣād aparokṣāt' iti śruteḥ*). True perceptual knowledge is indeed only pure consciousness, because of the *śruti*: "that the *brahman* is direct and immediate" (*BU* 3.4.1). For an analysis of the perception chapter of *Vedānta Paribhāṣā*, see my *Perceiving in Advaita Vedānta*.
20. *BSBh* 1.1.2.
21. See Appendix II on *anubhava* of this work.
22. Śaṃkara in his *BSBh* defines superimposition (*adhyāsa*) as follows: "*smṛtirūpaḥ paratra-pūrvadṛṣṭāvabhāsaḥ*." "The appearance elsewhere with a nature similar to recollection of what has been seen earlier. This definition could be construed in two ways:

"Similar to the object of recollection, [*adhyāsa*] is the false appearance of an object experienced previously as something other" (*arthādhyāsa*).

"Similar to recollection [*adhyāsa*] is the false apprehension of an object experienced previously as something else." (*jñānādhyāsa*).

The first definition refers to the illusory object; the second to an illusory perception. In the first, an object of cognition is confused with another object, e.g., perceiving a rope as a snake (apprehension of a thing as other than what in fact it is). In the second, one cognition is confused with another, e.g., perceiving a crystal as red on account of the red flower placed near it (perceiving a thing as other than what it is). Accordingly, the first is called "superimposition of object," and the second is called "superimposition of cognition." In the first, one falsely ascribes one thing to another; in the second, one falsely ascribes attributes of one thing to another.

When a rope is falsely cognized as a snake, the cognized snake—that is similar to the snake recollected on account of the similarities with the rope—is superimposed on the rope that is cognized vaguely; at the same time the cognition of the snake is superimposed on the cognition of the rope. In other words, there is a wrong cognition of a snake rather than a correct cognition of a rope.

23. See Arvind Sharma's review of Anantanand Rambachan's book *Accomplishing the Accomplished: The Veda as a Source of Knowledge, in Philosophy East and West*, 1993, pp. 737–43, and Rambachan's "Response to Professor Arvind Sharma," *Philosophy East and West*, 1994, pp. 721–724. Also, see the Appendix on *anubhava* in this work.
24. For a detailed and systematic treatment of this issue, see Bina Gupta's *Disinterested Witness: A Fragment of Advaita Vedānta Phenomenology* (Evanston, Ill: Northwestern University, 1998).
25. Śaṃkara, *Aparokṣānubhūti*, Vimuktānanda (tr.), (Belur Math, Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1938).
26. Ibid., verses 24–28.
27. Ibid., verses 102–103.

28. By "space" is meant metaphorically the silence, the solitude (*vijanaḥ*) which pervades the entire universe. Ibid., verse 110.
29. The same *brahman* is also time inasmuch as all beings arise from it.
30. Eight of these fifteen steps are found in the *Yogasūtras*, commonly known as the "*Aṣṭāṅga Yoga*," the "Eightfold Path of Discipline." These are: *yama* (abstention), *niyama* (self-regulation), *āsana* (posture), *prāṇāyāma* (control of breath), *pratyāhāra* (control of the senses), *dhāraṇā* (fixing the mind on the object of meditation), *dhyāna* (meditation), and *samādhi* (concentration, complete absorption).
31. *Yogasūtras*, I. 41-51.
32. *Śrī Bhāṣya*, I.1.1.
33. In this context, it is useful to note the distinction that the Advaitins make between *vṛtti jñāna* and *akhaṇḍākāra vṛtti jñāna*. The function of any *vṛtti* consists in removing the intervening veil, thereby facilitating the manifestation of the ever-present identity between consciousness and the content. A *vṛtti*, say, about a table, is illumined by the reflection of consciousness, destroys ignorance about the table, and manifests it. Every such manifestation of identity by *vṛtti* is by its nature limited and contingent; it is fragmented in form. *Akhaṇḍākāra vṛtti*, on the other hand, has no fragmented form, because the *brahman* has no form. Such great sayings as "*tat tvam asi*" give rise to the final *vṛtti* of the form of the pure impartite *brahman*. This *vṛtti* destroys the notion of difference between the individual self and the *brahman*. It is important to remember that this *vṛtti* does not manifest the *brahman*; it removes the ignorance that had been concealing the *brahman*. When ignorance concealing the *brahman* is removed, the *brahman* being self-luminous, shines forth. *Akhaṇḍākāra vṛtti*, for the Advaitins, is the highest human achievement. It conforms to *brahma jñāna* or *svarūpa jñāna*.
34. Śaṃkara, *BUBh*, I. 4. 7; *Upadeśa*, 12.3; 18. 176; and *Pañcadaśī*, I. 19.
35. See Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, translated by A. V. Miller (New Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass,1998), .86.Henceforth this work will be cited as *Phenomemology of Spirit*.

36. Heidegger's entire *corpus* may be regarded as a series of thinking on the meaning of "Being." The thread that runs through them all is the distinction between Being and beings. He holds that modern philosophy, beginning with Descartes up to Husserl, is an attempt to understand Being as "subjectivity." Heidegger asks: what is the Being of subjectivity, of the ego that exhibits intentional directedness of "consciousness" of human beings? This very question sets Being apart from subjectivity, which, after all, is an entity, a being. A. Hofstadter (trans. and ed.), *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), p.108.

37. *Upādhi* (limiting adjunct) is a limitation, a separable, distinguishable feature, as a red flower in the proximity of a crystal that appears to be red because of the presence of the red flower. A *viśeṣaṇa* (attribute), on the other hand, is an invariable distinguishing feature, as blueness in a lotus. The distinction between *viśeṣaṇa* and *upādhi* is one of the highlights of the Vedāntic thinking, marking its perspective off from the Nyāya and the other schools. For an illuminating account of the distinction between the two, see Madhusūdana Sarasvatī, *Advaitasiddhi*, chap. 1, sec. 24.

38. *Upalakṣaṇa* is an ascribed or extrinsic characteristic. The crow on the roof of Devadatta's house serves as a characteristic to single out the house from several other houses. Although the crow is not an attribute of the house, its presence still identifies the house: the identification is the significance here, it is never lost although the crow may fly away. *Upalakṣaṇa* is generally distinguished from *viśeṣaṇa* or *lakṣaṇa*, which enters into the very being of an object and distinguishes an object from other objects. The Advaitins argue that it is not necessary that a real property serve as the mark to distinguish one object from the other; an ascribed or assumed property might very well serve the purpose.

39. At the outset of his article "Sense and Reference," Frege introduces the distinction between sense (*Sinn*) and reference (*Bedeutung*): between that to which a sign refers, i.e., the reference of the sign and the sense of the sign, i.e., the mode of presentation of the referent. In his words: "regular connection

between a sign, its sense, and its referent is of such a kind that to the sign there corresponds a definite sense and to that, in turn, a definite referent, while to a given referent (an object) there does not belong only a single sign. Gottleb Frege, "Sense and Reference," *Contemporary Philosophic Logic*, edited by I. M. Copi and 1. A. Gould (New York: St.Martin's Press, 1978), pp. 66–67.

Every linguistic unit, argues Frege, has two modes of meaning: in one mode, meaning is the thing to which the expression refers; in the second mode, meaning is the sense of the expression. "Morning Star," "Evening Star" for example, refer to the same entity, the planet Venus. They are different ways of picking out the same planet. The Morning Star is a heavenly body visible in the sky in the morning and the Evening Star is a heavenly body that is visible in the sky at a certain time in the evening. Let me give another example. The "sum of 2 and 2" refers to a number and the square root of 16 refers to a number; while the operations and procedures involved are different, the number referred to in both the cases—the number 4—is the same. It is the senses of the expressions which differ. Just as it is not obvious from a consideration of the names "Morning Star" and "Evening Star" that the Morning Star is the Evening Star, so it is not obvious that the sum of 2 + 2 is the square root of 16. Frege argues that this distinction applies not only to substantives with which I am concerned in this analysis, but also to all linguistic units: to names, predicates, or as he calls them "concept-words" (*Begriffswörter*), and to complete sentences.

40. The question of interpreting this thesis, as also the task of translating the word "*ānanda*" into a Western language, English or German, is fraught with difficulties. And, in this work, I will not undertake this issue. For an analysis of consciousness and *ānanda*, see Cit (*Consciousness*) by Bina Gupta (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 123–30.

41. The claim that knowledge culminates in seeing and insight, that rational thinking is seeing the truth is also found in Husserl's doctrine of essential intuition (*Wesenschau*), intuition of the *eidos* (universal essences).

42. In *BSBh* I.1.1., Śaṃkara outlines four prerequisites for undertaking the study of the Advaitic texts:

    1. The ability to discriminate between the eternal and the non-eternal (*nityānitya vastu viveka*);
    2. Giving up of the desires for worldly enjoyments (*ihāmutrārtha bhogavirāga*);
    3. Control of mind, senses, and to develop such qualities as patience, power of concentration, and detachment (*śamadamādi śdhana sampat*); and
    4. Strong desire for liberation (*mumukṣutva*).

43. In spiritual philosophies there is some recognition of the possibility of transcendence of the world (in *mokṣa* or *nirvāṇa*).

44. *BSBh,* 1.1.2.

Part III

Reason and Experience: East and West

Chapter Six

Reason: East and West

I

Historical Background

In order to compare Western concept of "reason" with "reason" in the Indian schools of philosophy, let me begin with, at the risk of what might appear to be a digression, what "reason" means, and what it signifies in the Western context. It seems to me that a brief discussion of the meaning, significance, and usages of "reason" will help us determine whether there is any concept in Indian philosophy that is equivalent to what is generally understood by "reason" in Western thought.

There is a long history of the concept of "reason" in Western thought, and although on this occasion it is not essential to recall that history, it would still be useful to review some of its essential features. The questions that determine this history are: Is reason by itself a source of knowledge? Alternatively, is its function limited only to being critical of such means of knowing as perception and inference? Is reason merely discursive, i.e., conceptual or is it also, at some level of its development, intuitive? If it were simply discursive, then it would be able to apply its conceptual abilities only to the data that have been received through some other means, and, in that case, reason would

be dependent upon some prior mode of knowing; or, at a minimum, its functioning would presuppose some other mode of knowing that is already there. On the other hand, if reason were intuitive, then it would be able to present its own object to intuition, which would make reason an autonomous mode of knowing.

There is an additional question that philosophy came to terms with in modern times: what is the relation between reason and language as understood in the tradition from Plato to Hegel? Is reason completely non-linguistic as some in that tradition took it to be, or is it necessarily tied to language, as the very concept of "*Logos*," from which it is often taken to originate, implies? The facts—that as rational beings we use language and that language-use implies an inter-subjective community—might suggest that the Aristotelian insight that human rationality is best expressed in a social and political order, the *polis*, must be taken more seriously than the Platonic tradition made it appear.

Regarding the usages of "reason" in the Western philosophical tradition, one discerns two primary theses.

First, there is the metaphysical thesis connected with the Greek terms "*logos*" and "*nous*" meaning a "cosmic reason," the original unity of thought, language, and being which one comes across in Parmenides, and from which the conception of reason as a faculty of the human mind is derived. There is a long history of the evolution of this concept from Parmenides through Plato, Aristotle, and the Neo-Platonists up to Hegel.

The second use of "reason" in Western thought is closer to everyday linguistic use according to which one gives reason for what one believes to be the case. This use is more emphasized in the use of "reason" in Anglo-Saxon philosophy.

With this in mind, let us briefly review selected main phases of development of the concept of "reason" in Western context in order to help assess, in what form if any, it is available in Indian thought.

II

Main Phases of "Reason" in Western Thought

In reviewing the history of Western philosophy, one notices that reason in Western tradition goes back to the poem of Parmenides. This poem not only introduces the concept of "reason," but also contrasts it with sensory experience. A new beginning took place with the poem of Parmenides, who tells us about two paths, the path of sensory experience and the path of reason: the former leading to non-being, the latter to being. Sensory experience, the way of becoming, of opinion (*doxa*), gives us that which is changing, unstable, passing away, and takes us away from the path of knowledge. The object of reason, on the other hand, is unchanging, stable, eternal truth, the object of true knowledge; it is the way of truth, the way of being, of what is. Being for Parmenides necessarily excludes non-being, which cannot possibly be known. Whatever is known is known as being, which is changeless and change is mere appearance. Being is undifferentiated; difference and plurality are only appearances, mere names. Things are not what they seem to be. However, Parmenides did not give a good account of why people, besides being, posit a separate world of appearances.

The poem has ever since determined the fate of Western thought. The opposition between reason and experience ever since has remained an integral part of the history of Western thought up until recent times. To recall some of its main phases: one can easily trace the history of this concept through Plato's *Theaetetus*, and the *Republic*, Aristotle's Metaphysics, to the Kantian Critiques in modern times. Sensory experience, we are told, yields only particular truths relative to the individual subject, while reason is the source of universal and necessary truths, and thus, of the knowledge in the strict sense.

A direct inheritor of this thought is Plato's distinction between knowledge and opinion (*episteme* and *doxa*). The objects of knowledge are the unchanging ideas; the objects of *doxa* or opinion are ever-changing particulars. In the *Theaetetus*, Plato advances a famous argument to refute and reduce to absurdity *Theaetetus'* view that knowledge consists of sensations.[1] In this work, Socrates relentlessly pursues the question regarding the nature of knowledge (as distinguished from what are the possible objects of knowledge and from what are the different sorts of knowledge), shows the absurd consequences of Protagoras' doctrine that man is the measure of all things, argues that knowledge does not reside in mere sense-impressions and cannot be the same as perception, and finally, focuses upon the nature of judgment. In the *Republic*, the sensible particulars are said to be copies of the ideas, compared to mere shadows in the famous "Myth of the Cave" and the lower half of the line in the representation of the "Divided Line." Reason is the higher faculty; it intuits ideas and is the source of true knowledge.[2] There are two interesting additions to this overall scheme that occur in Plato's writings which I must mention at this point.

First, the ideas form a world, which is structured like a pyramid at the apex of which is the highest Idea, i.e., the Idea of the Good, the realm of unchanging and eternal Forms and at the bottom are the ideas of the sensible objects (*eikesia*). The science of the ideas in the *Republic* is called "dialectic" (worked out in detail in the *Sophists*), which is a method of clarifying and discovering relations among them. It is a process of thinking, in which the ideas are seen as related to each other by difference and identity, opposition and synthesis and lead to the highest Idea. Through rigorous intellectual effort and discipline, the philosopher attains the vision of the Good that liberates him from the world of

appearances. However, Plato also recognizes an intermediate realm between sense perception and dialectic, which is mathematical knowledge. Thinking (*dianoia*)—whose objects are mathematical entities—stands between the world of appearances and the pure intelligible objects (*noesis*) of knowledge (*episteme*). A training of the intellect is necessary to affect an escape from the world of appearances, initially in mathematics and then in moral philosophy. Mathematical procedure —which uses visible diagrams as illustrations of its objects and reasons deductively from the unquestioned postulates, axioms, etc.—is the link that carries the mind from the visible world to the highest knowledge; in other words, mathematics trains the mind to pass from *doxa* to *episteme*.

The second point concerns the best way to connect the two domains that Plato recognized. His use of the metaphors of "copying" and "participation" is as well known, as the difficulties associated with these metaphors. In the *Republic*, we are told that the prisoners in the cave (as we are, on this account) are accustomed to seeing only the shadows. When they are able to turn around and get a glimpse of the originals in the glare of light, their eyes are dazzled and they do not see anything. What is needed is to see the originals as the originals and the shadows as the shadows, the light as well as the darkness, and that would be wisdom. This account in a very striking manner draws our attention to the fact that wisdom consists in knowing the one and the many, the highest Idea and the particulars, in their mutual interrelation. If we press this picture further, we get a more comprehensive picture of reason and realize that the Parmenidean separation of the two paths and the Platonic separation of the two spheres can only be provisional. A truly wise person sees their interrelation and unity and realizes that the alleged separation of the two worlds must be overcome. These insights set the path for the subsequent

development of Western thought. I will briefly trace this history, in which the philosophies of Aristotle, Descartes, Kant, and Hegel represent the main phases, and which reaches a complete reversal in Husserl, as we will see.

Aristotle overcame the Platonic separation of worlds by defending the position that the Ideas are not detached from the world that we perceive; they are *in* the particulars rather than being independent and outside of them. Unlike the philosophers preceding him, Aristotle did not distrust the senses, he made use of them to observe and collect the specimens. He retained the changeless forms but rejected their transcendent character. He argued that such words as "imitation" (*mimēsis*), "participation" (*methexis*)—the words that Plato uses to describe the relationship between universals and particulars—are "mere empty phrases and poetic metaphors."[3] Reason derives the universals from the particulars, and has the power to discern the forms in particular exemplifications. He ascribed to reason the modest function of abstracting—replacing the Platonic function of intuiting the ideas—ideas from the sensory particulars. In other words, reason is no longer taken to be an autonomous faculty having its own domain of objects independent of sensory materials; it has the ability of abstracting the universals from the particulars, and in so doing, Aristotelian thought prepares the ground for the Kantian *Critique of Pure Reason*.

Descartes was more Platonic than Aristotelian insofar as reason for him is the faculty of clearly and distinctly perceiving the ideas and relations among them. All clear and distinct perceptions are apodictically true, reason yields necessary truths, e.g., the mathematical, (geometrical truths), the metaphysical, (e.g., the existence of God), and the philosophical, (e.g., "I think, therefore I am"). Since human reason is derived from the divine reason, it is

infallible and is not responsible for our errors. For Descartes, the will, rather than the reason, is the faculty of judgment. The will is responsible for judging beyond what is intuitively perceived and this judging is the source of error. It should be emphasized that on this account, reason is the faculty of clear and distinct intuition. The will is the faculty of judgment. Thus, we have a picture of the alternation between the Platonic and the Aristotelian understanding of reason. Christian thinking has retained elements from both: Thomas Aquinas was Aristotelian insofar as reason for him could only abstract from sensory experience; St. Augustine and Bonaventure on the other hand were simply Platonists insofar as according to them reason clearly intuits necessary truths. However, for both, the will remains the source of error, symbolized by the Biblical "Myth of the Original Pride" leading to eating the forbidden fruit.

Kant, closer to Aristotle than to Descartes, provides a comprehensive critique of the limits and pitfalls of the human faculty of reason. The Cartesian confidence that the human reason is derived from the divine reason and so infallible is no longer there and the Aristotelian rejection of the autonomy of reason is strengthened in its cognitive aspect. The Cartesian opposition between reason and will does not hold good any more, and it seems as though everything begins anew. As a result, we have a more comprehensive theory of reason than ever to be found in Western thought. Kant distinguishes between several fields within which reason operates:

1) the field of theoretical cognition,
2) the field of practical willing, and
3) the field of the judgments of beauty and purposiveness of nature.

In all these fields, reason is the source of universal and necessary principles; it serves to organize the sensible intuitions, inclinations, and judgments of taste, and raises them to the level of scientific knowledge, conception of moral laws, and judgments of beauty, respectively.

With regard to theoretical reason, reason is a faculty of knowledge, and Kant distinguishes between two levels of its activity, the lower functions in mathematics and the natural sciences, and the higher in speculative metaphysics. The former he calls "understanding" (so at least is how the German word "*Verstand*" is generally translated), and the latter is called "speculative reason" or "*Vernunft*," the level that breaks away from the limitations imposed by sensible intuitions and aims at knowing the pure, unconditioned, and supersensible reality, a task in which it is doomed to fail. The *Verstand* has its empirical as well as *a priori* applications; the *Vernunft* is only *a priori.*

The function of *Verstand* is to judge (contrary to the Cartesian determination that the function of reason is to have clear and distinct perceptions). A judgment is empirical when it employs empirical concepts as in "this table is brown," but these empirical judgments presuppose *a priori* concepts of the understanding, e.g., substance and quality. The *a priori* concepts by themselves cannot yield knowledge but require sensuous matter to which they are applied (which shows the Aristotelian influence). Unlike Descartes, mathematical knowledge is not due to rational intuition, but rather due to pure *a priori* intuitions functioning within the domain of sensibility. Thus, knowledge requires both *a priori* concepts and empirical intuitions; reason by itself does not yield any knowledge. Reason is the faculty of *a priori* knowledge. It is actualized in the intellectual function of thinking through concepts and judgments, especially as "pure reason," in the *a priori* presuppositions of knowledge. Mere reason cannot be the source of objective knowledge

having material content. Without intuition, mere rational knowledge is empty, and merely formal-logical. However, pure reason is an original condition of the possibility of experience (only with regard to the form); things-in-themselves cannot be known by pure reason (as Kant famously held).

Reason as *Vernunft* is to be kept apart from the understanding; it is the highest cognitive faculty, the faculty of principles. Its function is to bring the results of understanding under the highest unity of thinking. *It does not relate directly to any object, but only to understanding* and brings the objects of understanding under forms of the unity of reason. It does not prescribe any such forms to objects, but prescribes only laws to the understanding. The task of reason is to find, for every conditioned cognition of the understanding, an unconditioned cognition thereby bringing the unification of intellectual cognition to its completion.[4] Thus, reason directs the thinking at the level of understanding to its highest totality and unification. But *Vernunft* does not by itself create any objectively valid concept. From concepts, it rises up to the level of *idea (Idee).* The ideas of reason, like the concepts of understanding, are not determined at random; they form a system.[5]

Reason proceeds from the conditioned to the unconditioned: first, to the subject which is never a predicate; second, to the presupposition which itself presupposes nothing; and third, to an aggregate of the members of the division of a concept as requiring nothing further to complete the division. These yield the ideas of pure soul, of the absolute totality, and of the absolute Undefined (or God).[6]

Kant proceeds to expose the pretensions of the higher phase of rational thinking to yield metaphysical knowledge about supersensible realities, but being independent of any possible empirical verification, it does not yield any

objectively valid knowledge. As a result, the cognitive pretensions of reason can never be fulfilled and speculative metaphysical thinking is deprived of its cognitive claims.

Reason is a non-sensuous faculty, free from all empirical and conditioned processes, which has its own *intelligible* causality from its own freedom. As an intelligible faculty, it is not subjected to the conditions of temporal order. Its causality does not arise in time. In all free actions of humans, reason is present; it is the source of moral law.

Thus, the Kantian account of reason does not end with the theoretical reason; it is extended to the domain of will and is called "practical reason" or "reason as practical." Practical *reason* is the faculty of *free* causality, its domain is that of freedom, it is the source of moral laws, and indicates a supersensible realm beyond the phenomenal. Kant distinguishes between the pure will and the empirical will: empirical ends causally determine the empirical will and in this respect the will is not free. Pure (rational) will is *a priori*; the rational will is guided only by the *a priori* concept of duty or universally binding moral rules. Here insofar as the will unconditionally follows the moral law, it is also free inasmuch as the necessity to which it is subjected is the necessity of its own nature as a rational will. Kant calls it "autonomy." Rational will does not permit itself to be guided by opinions and inclinations, only the conception of duty, "the ought," moves it to act. As pointed out earlier, the recognition of will as a functioning of reason is anti-Cartesian but closer to the Aristotelian doctrine of practical reason or *phronesis*.

The story does not end here either. Reason is not only the source of Ideas, and of the moral law, it is also responsible for the feeling of the sublime.[7] Kant notes that the mere abilities even to think it [the Infinite] "as a *whole* indicate a faculty of mind which surpasses every standard of sense."[8] Before the Ideas of reason nature sinks into insignificance.

Thus, the various stages in the ascent of reason beyond the sensible world may be said to be "the Ideas of reason," the moral law, and the sublime.[9]

Reason as the source of all universal and necessary principles is operative not only in the spheres of knowledge and morality, but also in our aesthetic judgments. The Aesthetic *reason* mediates between, and unifies the two, by letting the free play of Imagination, far beyond the conditioned nature, and makes it possible to experience the sublime in nature and beauty in works of art. In this context, Kant makes a sharp distinction between a judgment of beauty and a judgment of taste. To judge a natural or art work as beautiful is not to say that one likes it; one is rather making a stronger claim to the effect that every rational human being ought to judge it as beautiful. Beyond the field of art, there is also the large rational perspective, which sees all the multifarious arrangements of forms and species of nature to have a meaning or purpose. This teleological perspective involves a way of making sense of nature, which goes beyond the causal laws. Kant, however, was quick to point out that the objective validity of the aesthetic and the teleological points of view does not rise up to the level of the natural laws; it only provides a principle of ordering whose objectivity is less than strict objectivity. One could say that to a rational mind, nature is not a mere chaos of objects in their material fullness of contents, but is, *as though*, purposive. Here reason supervenes again upon science to provide an overarching unity to things, but fails to achieve complete objectivity. Science, morality and art are all products of human rationality. Reason points beyond the causal realm to the realm of freedom, of supersensible reality and to a sublimity not to be exceeded by anything rational.

Though none of these is a possible object of knowledge, it is only in aesthetic experience of the sublime that there is an intuition of the infinite—not, to be sure, as an object but

as the infinity of subjectivity within.[10] A *reason*, that is internally, "broken," is nevertheless unified in a "system" in an "architectonic," lacking still a grand overriding monism.

In this imposing and ramified theory of reason, we have a picture of reason, which at crucial points is *broken*. In its cognitive venture, reason achieves successes in mathematics and physics but fails in its speculative adventures. In the sphere of morality, reason provides the universal and necessary principles but does not completely determine the individual moral agent's situation in which the agent has to make a moral choice. In the sphere of art and teleology of nature, the principles are universal and necessary, determining the highest rational point of view, but fail to assure its objectivity compared to the sciences and the moral principles. In all these different ways, Kant taught us to respect reason and warned us that we should not let ourselves be misguided by its pretensions. Kant was still a child of the enlightenment, reason in his philosophy became its own critique; it passed judgment on its own claims and abilities. As a result, the Kantian philosophy became a systematic self-criticism on the part of reason.

One may wonder: How could there be three different reasons: theoretical, practical, and aesthetic and why is it that Kant could not give us a conception of their unity? Alternatively, shall we look upon reason as a historical process of development of which the supposed three reasons are but three different stages? Obviously, there are different possibilities here for such a historical account. One may want to make the development of reason culminate either in moral perfection or in the work of art, or in perfect knowledge by reason of itself (self-knowledge). Fichte chose the first alternative, Schelling the second, and Hegel the third. However, what is common to all three is that they, viz., knowledge, morality, and art, are regarded as expressions of human reason insofar as they involve

universal and necessary principles. One might attempt to define reason in the Kantian tradition as that faculty of human mind, which is the source of universal and necessary principles, not merely in knowledge, but also in art and morality. Only a rational being can produce science, subject his will to moral laws, and appreciate works of art. For our purposes, it is not necessary to discuss in detail the transformations of this concept in the various phases of German Idealism; it would suffice to discuss only its final development in the philosophy of Hegel.

Hegel draws our attention to some of the above points when he argues that Kantian critique of reason leaves no room for the kind of knowledge that we get from the Kantian philosophy, so that it may transcend itself and envision the possibility of reason knowing itself. This self-knowledge on the part of reason must not only be intuitive; it must also be the goal of metaphysics. Thus, the transition from Kant to Hegel is marked by various attempts to unify the disjointed picture of reason that Kant offers.

As a brief summary, one may formulate Hegel's "reason" as a synthesis of the two opposed modes of knowing: sensory immediacy and abstract understanding. As combining the positive elements in each of the latter two, reason is both intuitive and conceptual. The *Begriff* of the final stage of reason is a concrete universal, as contrasted with the abstract particulars of sensory immediacy and the abstract universals of the understanding.

Kant was the first to distinguish between understanding and reason, the object of the former according to Kant is the finite and the conditioned, while the object of the latter is the infinite, and the unconditioned. However, as stated earlier, on his account reason is unable to *know* the infinite. Hegel shows that the infinite can be known. The infinite is the truth, and the truth is conceptually grasped. The "fixed opposites" of the Understanding cannot grasp the infinite

but where the *Begriff* is a dialectically developing process it can apprehend the Infinite conceptually.

In the *Phenomenology*, "reason" is reached after "consciousness" and "self-consciousness." For consciousness, the object is an other than the I, the object is being-in-itself. In self-consciousness, the object is the I itself, or rather another self-consciousness. From the exclusive specificity, self-consciousness rises to universality. The desiring ego becomes a thinking ego. Reason is the unification of consciousness and self-consciousness, of knowledge of an object and knowledge of self.

Reason develops into spirit; spirit is reason that knows itself and exists for itself. Reason is also characterized as consciousness' certainty that it is the whole of reality, the whole of truth.[11] Thus reason finds itself everywhere. It becomes an idealist philosophy of the world.

Hegel's conclusive position is stated in the "Introduction" to his *Philosophy of Right: "What is rational is actual and what is actual is rational."*[12] Reality is not any longer "facts" or "data." What truly exists contains within itself justification of an inherent rationality, and as its rationality becomes explicit it becomes *actual*. This statement, says Hegel, must be immediately obvious to theologians who believe in God's dominion over the world. In this sense, Hegelian philosophy is also a theology.[13] "The identity of thought and being"... is merely the expression of the divine nature of reason ...."[14] No antithesis to reason exists, reason is all (as in traditional theology, God is all).

"Actuality," in this context, does not simply mean reality that is given, but the truly developed potentiality of things. It is the Aristotelian notion of actuality—as pure *energia*, the fully developed form of reality in which all potentialities are actualized—coincides with the concept of reason. In order to adequately understand it, one has to go through a long process of Hegelian interpretation, especially the one

we find in his *Phenomenology* and his *Logic*.[15] In the *Phenomenology*, Hegel gives us a series of "shapes of consciousness," as he calls them, beginning with the most simple, and therefore the most abstract, viz., certainty of pure sensations and ending with the most complex, and therefore the most concrete form of the spirit which he calls "absolute knowledge." Each form of consciousness has its own conception of truth and its corresponding ontology. It is only in the concluding phase that the two, knowledge and reality, coincide. This account, a history of human consciousness, is so sketched that somewhere around the middle, a form of consciousness called "reason" appears. This is the age of the rise of modern science in which reason discovers itself in nature. In the external world, the rational scientist by observing discovers laws, in general, a rationality, which in accordance with the Kantian philosophy the mind has already put there. The reason also discovers itself in the workings of the human mind in the forms of psychological and logical principles. The result is a hasty idealism born of the confidence of reason that there is nothing beyond its grasp. In this form of idealism, reason is "the conscious certainty of being all reality." However, reason still does not understand this thesis and does not yet know how everything could be rational. It has the faith that there is no real opposition to it; every putative other is only its own internal differentiation. Scientific rationalism, Hegel warns us, is not yet aware of its limitations, of its origin and of its destiny. It is still thought in terms of individual minds and the individual thinker believes that in her scientific project, or in her moral will, or in her artistic creation, she exhibits this rationality. It is at this point that Hegel brings to bear in his discussions a concept of rationality, which lay unthought of since Aristotle first pointed it out. Aristotle knew that human rationality is best expressed in individual's social life and in her political

organization. However, in the European thinking through the eighteenth century, reason was conceived of in individual terms. As long as the social existence and one's relationship to the others is not transformed and made rational, reason would not know itself as actual. The French Revolution brought home to Hegel the truth that the given social order needs to be destroyed and recasted to fit the ideals of reason, and only then, absolute knowledge will be possible; spirit will be concretized in actual existence and reason will know itself.

This historical account is formulated purely conceptually independently of the history of consciousness in *Logic*. The Absolute idea is nothing but a system of categories or concepts, which, as concrete forms, develop in sequence, and the resulting system of concepts is the Absolute reality on Hegel's view. The real is rational. The Kantian transcendental dialectic—in which Kant brings out the dialectical contradictions in speculative thinking and on that ground condemns speculative metaphysics to be impossible—Hegel transformed into a real dialectical process in which reality develops through many contradictions and resolutions of these contradictions. In effect, reason becomes dialectical reason in which logic of reality coincides with the inner truth of religion, viz., nature and history are both concrete manifestations and self-realizations of God, except that religion does not quite understand the conceptual truth underlying its figurative representations.

Heidegger distinguishes between instrumental (calculative) thinking and meditative thinking.[16] Meditative thinking is *Gelassenheit* with regard to entities; it is to dwell on what is close, what concerns us here and now—not the thinking of science. This is reached in the experience of the identity of thinking and Being, an identity that consists in mutual appropriation.

"Logic," deriving from "*Logos*" is concerned with "saying," with saying something as something. It lays down something, *Legen*. Thinking is to lay bare (*Legen*) something in a judgment. Judging is an act of reason. What evokes thinking is this entity-Being, what Heidegger calls "ontological difference."

Heidegger argues that the question "what is thinking?" ("*Was Heisst Denken*?") conceals four different questions:

(1) What does the word "thinking" mean?

(2) What does one understand by "thinking" according to the received doctrine of thinking, namely, "logic"?

(3) What is meant by genuinely performing the act of thinking according to its essence?

(4) What is that which calls us to "think"?

All these questions are unified according to Heidegger, in question no. 4. This question about "thinking" should not be confused with the familiar question about knowledge: how does knowledge relate to an object?

Heidegger speaks of "thinking," not *of* experiencing. As he gave up, or modified, his early attachment to phenomenology and so to the *given*, he preferred to speak of "thinking." Philosophy is thinking. Only he wants this thinking to be non-representational and non-objective. It is to be "poetic," to be "thanking" of Being's gifts.[17] Now all this talk is obfuscating, but we still are far from any idea of "experience." "Experience" seems to be tinged with subjectivity. The philosophy that places subjectivity at the center, according to Heidegger, reaches its culmination in Husserl's transcendental phenomenology. Heidegger wants to overcome it.

In sum, we can say that Plato and Descartes ascribed to reason the ability to intuit its own object: the realm of ideas in clear and distinct perceptions (and the concrete spirit respectively). Kant was the greatest opponent of such a conception of intuitive reason; he denied to humans the power of intellectual intuition and restricted intuition to the domain of sensuous knowledge of objects and looked upon reason as entirely discursive and conceptual, but all critical judgments on the activity of reason and its limits is made by reason itself. In other words, in the Kantian *Critiques*, reason sits in judgment upon itself. Kant did not realize that when once reason determines its own limits in terms of what it can and cannot achieve, it also transcends those limits. Reason may be theoretical, practical, and aesthetic, yet the question whether Kant is able to unify them under one concept is soon asked by his admiring successors.

In reviewing what I have stated so far, I am sure it should be obvious to my readers by now that reason has been used in a variety of senses in the Western tradition. These senses may be grouped under three headings:

First, there is a strictly metaphysical conception connected with the ancient idea of *logos* understood as a cosmic principle; secondly, there is a mundane idea of a faculty of human thinking but restricted to knowledge of the empirical world, what Kant calls *"Verstand"* or Understanding; and finally, there is reason which mediates between (1) and (2), as a human faculty of thinking, and seeks to yield knowledge of the supersensible, the Kantian reason (*Vernunft*). I will elaborate on these three a little further in order to highlight the contrast with Indian conception of reason.

III

Reason: East and West

With the above three senses of the Western concept of "reason" in mind, let me now turn to a comparison of the Indian and the Western conceptions of reason. I will begin with the first sense.

As stated earlier, the Western concern with thinking or thought (*Denken*) and, in the long run, with logic, is derived from the concept of "*Logos.*" The *Logos* has both a larger and a lesser metaphysical meaning: in its larger metaphysical meaning, it refers to a cosmic principle of organization and differentiation of the cosmos, which is the condition of the possibility of all thinking, science, and philosophy. To explain the less metaphysical sense, I will turn to Heidegger's reading of it, as presented in his lecture "*Was Heisst Denken*?"[18] Heidegger connects *logos* with the word "*legen*" meaning to "lay down," "to preserve," "to put together," various entities as expressed in a sentence in which something is said about something. This structure (which logic takes up in a narrow sense) is a condition of the possibility of the world as an ordered whole. Taken in this meaning, *Logos* is transcendental in the Kantian sense, but prior to or more fundamental than the Kantian forms and categories.

If the original inception of the Western concept of "reason" was, if one follows Heidegger, in the writings of such pre-Socratic philosophers as Parmenides and Heraclitus, then we can say, following Mehta,[19] a well-known Indian scholar on Heidegger, that the original opening for the Indian tradition took place in the Upaniṣads. Thus, in order to assess whether the first sense of reason outlined above is found in the Indian context, I will begin with the Upaniṣads. Surely, any one mildly

familiar with the Upaniṣads, knows that the Upaniṣads do not contain principles of reason, which could be called "logic" in the Western sense; however, it is important to remember that these texts opened the Indian mind to the need for a disciplined investigation into the nature of being, by distinguishing the one being (*ekam sat*) from the plurality of appearances. They also moved philosophical thought beyond a preliminary and necessary distinction between the subject and the object in order to arrive at an identity underlying both. This disciplined investigation embodied in many discourses in the Upaniṣads—in the form of questions, suggested answers, and their rejections until a satisfactory view is arrived at—laid down the formal structure of rational inquiry. The later schools, the Nyāya in particular, developed a detailed structure of inquiry, articulations, and systematizations of the Upaniṣadic inquiry. I am not trying to suggest that there is a logical structure in the rituals and the discourses about these rituals in the *Brāhmaṇas*; however, it is not far-fetched to emphasize that in the *śruti* literature one could discern, with careful reading, the first voice of reason. Here I will only give some indications of the important sources of this insight. The *Ṛg Veda* asks: *kasmai devāya haviṣā vidhema*? (to which god should we offer oblation?) One also asks: Is there anyone who knows what is that one being which is called by different names? Perhaps no one, is the initial reply, not even the Gods. Or, one may turn one's attention to the discourses in the Upaniṣads that follow such questions as "please teach me the nature of the self; tell us what is *brahman*, tell us what is that one being from which everything arises," etc. I have cited these questions in order to bring home to my readers familiar with the text that these discourses began as answers to questions. It is quite possible that one is not attentive enough to the character and implications of these questions, because these questions are not immediately followed by a sentence

that gives the answer; in fact, more often than not, they lead the disciples through a series of possible answers until the final answer is given. In order to give the readers a complete idea of what I am talking about, let me cite here the complete text of one of the discourses found in *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (*CU*). In this dialogue we find that both Indra (representing the Gods) and Virocana (representing demons) approach Prajāpati for knowledge of the immortal self.

> Prajāpati: "The self which is free from evil, old age, death, grief, hunger and thirst, real is whose desire, whose thought is the real, he should be sought, one should desire to understand him. He who has found out and understands that self, he obtains all worlds and all desires."[20]

Indra and Virocana heard this and they became eager to learn about the self, which is free from sin, old age, death, hunger, thirst, etc. They said to themselves "let us seek that self, the self by seeking whom one obtains all worlds and desires." They went to Prajāpati with fuel in their hands and lived with him for thirty-two years as his students.

> Prajāpati: "Desiring what have you been living?"[21]
>
> Indra and Virocana: We would like to know "the self which is free from evil, old age, death, grief, hunger and thirst, whose desire, thought is the real, he should be sought, one should desire to understand him. He who has found understands that self, he obtains all worlds and all desires."

> Prajāpati: "The person seen in the eye is the self. 'That is the immortal, the fearless, the *brahman*."
>
> Indra and Virocana: "But, who is he, who is perceived in water and in a mirror, who is he?'
>
> Prajāpati: "Indeed, the same one is perceived in all these."

Prajāpati means by the self the seer of all seeing, but Indra and Virocana mistake the self for the person that is seen, not the person that sees. Thus, it is not surprising that they ask whether the image that is seen in the water and in the mirror is the self. In other words, Indra and Virocana confuse the true self with the body.

Prajāpati: "Look at yourself in a pool of water and ask me whatever you do not understand about the self." The two did so.

> Prajāpati: "What do you see?"
>
> Indra and Virocana: "We see our picture with hair, nails, etc."
>
> Prajāpati: "Adorn yourselves, put your best clothes on, tidy yourselves and look into the pool of water."
>
> The two did so.
>
> Prajāpati: "What do you see now?"
>
> Indra and Virocana: "We see just as we are: adorned, dressed up in best clothes and tidy."
>
> Prajāpati: "adorned, dressed up in best clothes and tidy, that is the self, that is the *brahman*; it is immortal and fearless."

Hearing this explanation, Indra and Virocana leave with the mistaken notion that the *ātman* is the same as the body. Virocana so informs the demons; Indra, however, before reaching the gods saw the problems with Prajāpati's explanations and is overwhelmed with doubts and says that he does not see any good in this explanation because this implies that this self in the shadow is adorned when the body is adorned, dressed when the body is dressed, cleaned when the body is cleaned, then the self will also be blind if the body is blind, lame if the body is lame, crippled if the body is crippled, and will perish when the body perishes.[22]

Indra returned to Prajāpati with further questions and Prajāpati suggests that Indra should live with him for another thirty-two years so that Prajāpati could answer his questions and explain to him the nature of the self.

> Prajāpati: "He who moves happy in a dream, he is the self, he is the immortal, the fearless."[23]

Indra again went away; however, he immediately realized that even though this self is not blind, lame, etc., when the body is blind, lame, etc., a self experiences different kinds of satisfaction in a dream and even the dreaming self is subject to pleasure and pain. Thus, the self seen in a dream cannot be the same as the *ātman*, the true self, simply because in the dream state the self can roam independent of the body. Indra returns to Prajāpati again and expresses his doubts to him. Prajāpati asks Indra to live with him for another thirty-two years so that Prajāpati could answer his questions.

> Prajāpati: "When a person is asleep with senses withdrawn, [when one] is serene, and sees no dream–that is the self. This is immortal, this is the *brahman*."[24]

Indra left; however, he was not yet satisfied; he soon realizes that the self experienced in deep sleep cannot be the *ātman*, because this explanation suggests to Indra that when everything is withdrawn even the subject ceases to be; it is destroyed. So he returns to Prajāpati one more time and tells him that in deep sleep, the self does not know itself nor is it conscious of any objects, and asks for further instructions. Prajāpati asks Indra to live with him for another five years.

> Prajāpati: "This body is mortal; it is destroyed upon death, but it is the support of that deathless and the bodiless self; the bodily self is affected by pleasure and pain, but the bodiless self is free from pleasure and pain. Air, clouds, lightning, thunder, are bodiless, when they arise from the yonder space reach the highest light appears each with its own form; likewise, that serene one, when he rises up from this body reaches the highest light appears in his own form. Such is the Supreme self. The self is joined with the body like a horse to the cart; the relation is external." [25]

After so many questions and answers Prajāpati reveals to Indra the true nature of the self. The bodiless self is unchangeable essence of the empirical self, the I-consciousness; it is immortal. It is the highest light (*parama jyotiḥ*), the light of lights.

In the above dialogue, answer after answer is rejected by adducing reasons. The above text gives us a recorded example of rational inquiry. In so saying, I keep open the question whether it is "rational" in the full-blooded Western sense, or whether we can discern here a specifically Indian

sense of rationality. It actually raises the question: what constitutes a good or acceptable reason for setting aside a suggested answer. The hypothesis that is suggested by the teacher and reflected over by the pupils, namely, that the self is the body, is set aside because the body is subject to pain and suffering, which goes against the explicit premise of the discourse, namely, the self is that by knowing which one is free, not only from all fears, but also from all pain and suffering. But we have to ask: does this constitute a good reason for not accepting an answer? Also, in what sense of "reason" is it a reason? One thing seems to be clear, that it is not a purely logical reason: meaning by "logical" self-consistency or absence of self-contradiction. The proposed answer does not contradict itself or some inner constituent of it, but rather contradicts a premise implicit in the whole inquiry. The inquiry into *ātman* is undertaken under the assumption that the knowledge of *ātman* would bring about freedom from fear, pain and suffering. Any answer that is to be accepted must be consistent with this assumption. A logicality is certainly involved in the evaluation of answers, but the logicality is not simple formal-logical, but one could say, material-logical. It is in this sense that the specifically rational thinking emerges in the Upaniṣads, further developed in the writings of the skeptics, most notably Sanjay, strengthened in the Pāli *Nikāyas*, and formalized in the Nyāya *śāstras* and continued response to the skeptical challenge, flows into the *pramāṇa* theory of various schools. We have here a rudimentary account of the history of Indian rationality.

It is worth noting that in the last sentence of the preceding paragraph, I discussed the Indian concept of "rationality" but not of "reason." Let me briefly elaborate on this use of the word. The Indian thinkers engaged in rational discourses and gradually came to lay down the rules that guided such discourses; they, however, did not

hypostatize reason as an ontological entity, as power, or a faculty of knowledge until later in Sāṃkhya and Vedānta. The lack of such hypostatization and the consequent lack initially of a distinct name for the faculty has sometimes led commentators to express the opinion that Indian philosophy lacks the concept of "reason." Such a judgment hastily advanced fails to note not only the presence of appropriate discourse in the Upaniṣads and Pāli *Nikāyas*, but also the development of the science of logic and the *pramāṇa* theories. The sense in which they do not advance a concept of "reason" amounts to the absence of a distinct designation of an ontological being called "Reason" or "*Logos*" as also the lack of a distinct faculty responsible for rational thinking. We need not be deterred by these absences but may instead wish to transform them to our advantage.

The Indian philosophers recognized the need to found the grammatical and the linguistic structures of the spoken language, in this case, Sanskrit, in an unspoken but eternal structure of language. If the spoken language consists of sounds uttered by speakers, then underlying them is the noumenal language that precedes any actual speaking or utterance but makes phenomenal manifestation possible. Thus, the Grammarians distinguish between various levels of language, the deepest level of which is the unuttered, but making possible any utterance by human speakers.

If anything in Indian philosophy provides an anticipation of the ancient Greek concept of "*Logos*," it is the concept of language, prior to phenomenal expression as uttered speech. One may ask: "what does this concept of language have to do with the metaphysical concept of reality?" The answer is clear: it led Bhartṛhari to the concept of *śabda brahman* according to which the original noumenal Word is *brahman*. When they said that the *brahman* is *śabda*, they were not talking about the expressed or uttered sound (*dhvani*), but the noumenal sound word (*avyākṛta*). We know

that the word "*Logos*" meant both language and thought.[26] In the Indian context, nowhere is this unity of language and thought more precisely articulated than in Bhartṛhari's book *Vākyapadīya*. However, with the exceptions of Bhartṛhari and Mīmāṃsā, in the entire corpus of Indian thinking the logical theory of rational discourse goes on independently of any metaphysical grounding. Neither the Buddhist philosophers, nor the Naiyāyikas, nor the Advaitins took it up; Advaita grounded all cognitions in consciousness, not in language. Thus, one could easily conclude that of the three concepts of reason outlined above, no.1 recedes to the background in the Indian context.

With this in mind, let me now turn to the second and the third Western senses of reason outlined above.

With regard to (2), namely reason as understanding, one has to look very closely in order to identify anything like it in Indian thought. That there is a level of knowledge which is not a mere receptivity of what is given but also involves conceptualization is common to most Indian epistemologists. It is found in the well-known distinction between non-conceptual (*nirvikalpaka*) and conceptual (*savikalpaka*) perception. Before proceeding further, let me underscore an important aspect of the Kantian forms and categories, which are the forms of understanding (leaving out space and time, which, for Kant, are forms of intuition). The Kantian *Verstand* is a capacity of conceptual thinking which by itself does not yield any intuitions or any given data; it is only used to order, systematize and conceptualize the data received through sensibility. In this sense, *Verstand* is conceptual and discursive (not intuitive) and a condition of the possibility of scientific thinking about the world. While *Verstand* conceptualizes the empirical data thereby producing empirical concepts, it has built into its original structure a set of *a priori* concepts, for example, the ideas of causality, substance, to name only the two most important.

The Kantian reason, however, is not merely conceptual knowledge of empirical phenomena, but also conceptual construction of objects out of the given data. In none of the Vedic epistemologies, we have such a theory of the construction of the world. The Mīmāṃsakas and the Nyāya believe that *savikalpaka* is conceptual; it apprehends the relational structures, but all relations are as much there in the world as are the relata. In *savikalpaka* perception, the knowing mind relates what were earlier apprehended as unrelated, but it does not add anything to the entities of the world. When one perceives, say, an individual cow, one, along with the cow, also perceives the cowness, the relation between universal cowness and the particular, and the knowing mind adds nothing to the world. In order to have a Kantian type of reason, which not only knows but also constructs, we need (a) a conceptualism in the sense that concepts are in the human mind and not really out there in the world, (b) a theory of construction out of sensory representations, and (c) an idea of *a priori* or original, non-empirical structure of the human intellect. These three conditions must be fulfilled for making a Kantian type of understanding possible.

Let us quickly look at which of the Indian schools have these three conditions available. Only Advaita Vedānta recognizes universals to be concepts, products of the *buddhi*, and in that sense, supports a form of conceptualism. The Nyāya and the Mīmāṃsakas are realists with regard to universals and the Buddhists are nominalists. Regarding whether the concept of "*a priori*" is available in Indian thought, it is important to remember that anything that is in the body has its causal origin, given the all-pervasive belief in rebirth and *karma*. The only thing that is beginningless, with the exception of whatever is eternally real, is *avidyā* or ignorance. That *avidyā* is beginningless is almost universally agreed upon by all those schools that do not take *avidyā* to

be a mere absence of knowledge. Being beginningless, it could not have a causal origin. It, therefore, is a good candidate, perhaps the only candidate, to be considered as *a priori* in Indian thought. In that case, one could say that the phenomenal world is a construction of *avidyā*, under the categories of cause and effect, substance and quality, terms and relations. When Dignāga argues that *kalpanā* or imagination adds to the pure perceptual presentations such forms as names, universal class characters, etc., he was proposing a constructionist theory of the world that comes as close to the Kantian as any other Indian philosopher. This is the only proposal that comes close to (c). Thus, what we have is as follows: the Advaitin is a conceptualist and, not unlike the Buddhist, has a notion of *avidyā* as *a priori*, but lacks an idea of the construction of the world. But the Buddhist, for example Dignāga, has a concept of construction and, possibly, a doctrine of categories (name, universal, etc.) but consistent with the Buddhist position, does not have a doctrine of concepts. The so-called concepts are mere names for the Buddhists. Thus, it seems that different elements of the Kantian understanding are available in different places but never together to give the full-fledged Kantian notion. Let me add that not having the Kantian notion does not imply that Indian philosophers did not have a notion of rational thinking. One can have the notion of rational thinking independently of the Kantian notion both in the West and in India. However, in this context, if we are looking for a specific concept of "reason" as understanding that made its appearance in the West in Kant, then we can safely say that it did not appear in the history of Indian thought.

Finally, do we have in Indian thought the Kantian notion of reason in the sense in which reason refuses to be restricted to the empirical phenomenal world and proceeds to reach the infinite as the unconditioned reality, no matter

whether it succeeds in these efforts or not? We know that whereas Kant concludes that reason's aspirations are destined to be frustrated insofar as it cannot yield any knowledge of the infinite, Hegel claims that a suitable doctrine of the categories can lead us to a comprehension of the infinite. We must now try to determine whether in the large spectrum of Indian thought reason leads us from the conditioned to the unconditioned, from the finite to the infinite. Thus, the obvious question: where does Indian philosophy stand on this issue?

The Upaniṣads in no uncertain terms declare that the self is to be heard, reflected upon (*mantavyo*), and meditated upon or ultimately seen. The word "*manana*" means reflective thinking, which commentators have explained as consisting in establishing one's thesis (*svapakṣa sthāpanā*) and rejecting the opponent's thesis (*parapakṣa nirākaraṇa*), setting aside the thought of impossibility of one's position (*asambhāvanā buddhi nirākaraṇa*) by one's own thinking. To "hear" involves opening oneself to the instructions of the teachers, to be completely receptive to what the text says, but this receptivity is succeeded by one's own active reflection on what is heard and read, resulting in a full comprehension of a thesis, in this case, of the nature of the self. This involves logical argumentations, and use of such conceptual activities as cause/effect, one and many, permanence and change. But notice that this process of rational thinking or *manana* is to be followed by meditation (*nididhyāsana*) and consequent "seeing." This sequence suggests something deeply important about Indian thought. It seems that at some point reflection—that is logical, rational, thinking—has to end and is to be replaced by a process which falls outside the domain of logic, the process that is geared toward seeing.

In the Pāli *Nikāyas*, the Buddha reiterates that mere logical reasoning cannot demonstrate more than the

possibility of something, whereas actuality can only be established by seeing. The knowledge, therefore, of the actuality of an object, finite or infinite, requires a kind of knowing which must include within it an element of seeing. This is what the Buddha calls "knowing-seeing." This is also close to the Kantian doctrine that reality is given in sense, according to "the schema of reality" which is time filled with sensation. Concepts in the Kantian system must be supplemented by intuition or seeing in order to go beyond mere possibility to actuality.

It seems therefore that although a philosophy is a rational activity of thinking, philosophical knowledge cannot comprehend knowledge of its object, namely, the infinite. Philosophical knowledge can only deliver the conceptual possibility and leaves it to a process of meditation to yield the intuition needed for the knowledge of the infinite. So far, both Kant and Hegel seem to be right: Kant insofar as conceptual thinking could only yield the possibility and Hegel insofar as "*Begriff*," a kind of concept, could result in intuitive comprehension. However, given that there are deep problems about precisely determining the scope of "reason" in Indian thought, we cannot assert that rational thinking whether as reason or as understanding will return with a Kantian despair or will be able to celebrate the Hegelian success. Texts like the one I have quoted above ("*śrotavyo*") seem to suggest that the infinite object cannot be known by reason alone; it has to be experienced. So far, Kant is right. This leaves the task of determining an epistemological concept beside reason, namely, the idea of experience.

Many of the differences in the conceptions of reason between the Indian and Western thinking derive from one basic difference, viz., whereas Western philosophy admits a separation of sense-experience from reason, Indian philosophy does not. This contrast has been the "original

sin" of the Western philosophy; both the empiricists and the rationalists suffer from it and had to construct theories and invent links to account for the possibility of scientific knowledge. Whereas in the case of the empiricist Hume, the laws of association did the job of deriving objective knowledge from subjective impressions, the rationalists held that the purpose of reason is to clarify the confused contents of sense perception. Kant recognizes the Platonic contrast between sense perception and thought and the need of the one for the other, though another faculty, namely, imagination, carried out this task. Sensations are ordered in space and time and related together in the form of judgments, and thought necessitated that its conceptual categories be schematized into more concrete temporal relations. This separation of reason and experience runs through the Kantian moral theory, which he sought to bridge over in his theory of aesthetic experience found in the *Critique of Judgment*.

Most Indian philosophical *darśanas*, on the other hand, do not separate reason and experience in the way in which it is done in the Western thought. Sensory experience not merely amounts to receiving personal impressions but delivers to us a world of things, enduring in different measures—some as instantaneous particulars, while others ever-lasting—and in between fall things of the world that originate, endure for some time, and eventually pass out of existence. It is worth remembering that sense perception in Indian philosophy, with the exception of Buddhism, apprehends universals instantiated in the particular thing as well as relations that obtain between them.

If *"buddhi"* is the name for rational activities of the determination of the nature of things to the extent that in sensory perception or *pratyakṣa* one apprehends a jar as a jar as distinguished from a cloth, this perception involves the activity of *buddhi*. Insofar as every perception regards

its object either as favorable or unfavorable, conducive to *sukha* (pleasure) or *duḥkha* (pain), that also is a function of *buddhi*. Hearing a sentence uttered by a speaker and understanding its meaning involve both sensory perception and reflective thinking. There is no pure thinking in the sense of Western thought, that is to say, the thinking that does not derive its content from sensory experience. All this follows from the unavailability of the concept of *a priori* in Indian thought. Reason does not possess any knowledge independent of experience. If a newborn infant has its traces or *saṃskāras*, those are the effects of experiences of past lives.

The concept of *a priori* in Western thinking on reason makes its initial appearance in the Platonic doctrine that "all knowledge is recollection," reappearing in the Cartesian thesis of innate ideas transplanted in the soul at the time of the birth, the Kantian thesis about the *a priori* forms of sensibility and understanding, reaching its final completion in the Hegelian thesis that reason provides its own content as well as form and that nothing comes from outside. If this is one extreme, i.e., the rationalist extreme, then the other extreme is that of such empiricists as Hume according to whom all rational cognition is reducible to sensory data and their associations, that anything that is not so reducible, e.g., the mathematical knowledge, is merely tautological. On this extreme empiricist position, logic becomes purely formal, analytic, and tautologous, and the question of how logic applies to empirical data remains unanswered. This problem does not arise in the context of Indian philosophy. Western thought has its extreme possibilities realized on the one hand in Hegel's logic and on the other hand in the empty formalism of purely formal logic. The former gives to reason unlimited power for generating its own content, the latter hands over or surrenders all contents to sensory

experience leaving logical reason to its empty play with uninterpreted signs. A close study of the nature of Indian logic and epistemology shows that, with the exception of Buddhism, this separation between reason and experience is nowhere available.

It has been a common position of most interpreters of Indian thought, that Indian philosophy does not glorify reason, but rather calls upon us to experience and to intuit. In this book, I have departed from this conventional way of viewing Indian thought. I have shown, taking into account the *pramāṇa* theories, that every *pramāṇa* including *śruti* is used both as a reason for justifying beliefs, and also as a way of presenting the experience of the object of that belief. As a result, reason and experience are inseparably intertwined and are not opposed to each other as one finds in Western thought. From this point of view, we gain a renewed understanding of the way Hegelian texts help us, not with regard to the metaphysical thesis of the absolute, but with regard to the epistemological thesis developed in Hegel's phenomenology. In the introduction to his *Phenomenology*, Hegel tells us how consciousness develops from perception to thinking, from scientific thinking to self-consciousness, from self-consciousness to reason, and from reason to spirit. In this process, each higher level of consciousness arises from the preceding level, and its object is the truth of the preceding object. He defines "experience" as this arising of the new object from the preceding object, of the new mode of consciousness from the preceding one. Thus, consciousness undergoes an experience of its own developing truth until absolute knowledge is reached. In this scheme, reason and experience are inextricably blended together. In my account, I have shown that the same characterizes Indian thinking.

Is Reason Ever Intuitive?

The general Western answer to this question is in the negative. Reason is conceptual; it is a faculty of thinking, which consists in making judgments. In a judgment one subsumes a particular under concepts. Only particulars are intuited, generalities are not. In the judgment "this is red," "this" stands for an intuition, but "red" is a concept, which applies not merely to "this" but to many other particulars. This is the sense in which Kant held that reason (as understanding) is discursive, not intuitive. This view has dominated Western thought since Kant.

But under the influence of this important position, many Western thinkers forget that this is not the oldest view in the history of Western thought. The opposite view was held more famously by Plato, the Platonists, and continued to be influential until the time of Descartes. In Plato's view reason is as much a faculty of intuition as the senses are, only their objects are different. In sense perception, particulars are intuited, while in reason the universals are intuited. We can say that on the Platonic theory, reason is the faculty of intuiting "Ideas." This position surfaced in Descartes, who held that truth must be clearly and distinctively intuited. Rational thinking must culminate in a clear and distinct perception of the truth. Descartes' method of universal doubt culminated in a clear and distinct perception of the truth articulated in his famous statement "*cogito ergo sum.*" Kant's view that reason is discursive rather than intuitive resulted in denying to human beings the capacity of intellectual intuition, which Kant's successors used to set up an unbridgeable gap between human reason and divine reason. This complete separation between the two and the emphasis on a total distinction between man and God was rejected by German idealism.

Founded upon the protestant religion, German Idealism regarded human thinking as being capable of rising up to the level of God's thinking, and thereby cultivate an intuitive reason. There is no need to go into the details about how this thinking came about, suffice it to note that much of it was embodied in the distinction between empirical and transcendental consciousness and the possibility of thinking ascending up from the level of the empirical to the transcendental. I could express this irrespective of specific philosophers involved in certain general terms, but the philosophers I have in mind are Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel. With Hegel, German idealism spent itself out. We may say that for Hegel, there are three levels of the development of reason. The first level of sensory intuition develops into scientific thinking (the second level) and eventually matures into intuitive reason (the third level). While reason is not intuitive at the beginning, and in science, as also at lower level of philosophical thinking, it is discursive, philosophy eventually has to rise up to the level of intuitive reason as exemplified in what Hegel calls "absolute knowledge."

It would be worthwhile to trace the concept of "reason" in Indian thought keeping the above outline in mind, but we should not let ourselves be prejudiced by it. Consider first the Naiyāyika position. A sensory perception (e.g., "this flower is red") gives knowledge of particular qualities like "red" and "this flower in front of me," i.e., the particular substance to which that quality really belongs. But the Naiyāyikas as well as the Vaiśeṣikas, in spite of their empiricistic position, never restricted sense intuition to particulars. Along with the particulars perceived, one also perceives, under suitable conditions, the universals, e.g., "redness" and "thisness" and "flowerness," when one articulates perceptual knowledge in the sentence "this flower is red." A Platonist would have found this absurd

inasmuch as it ascribes the ability to *see* universals which are only assigned by him to reason. A Kantian would find the theory unsatisfactory because the sentence "this flower is red" expresses a judgment, and judgment is a function of understanding or thinking. For the Naiyāyika however, a perceptual judgment, involving names of particulars and concepts such as "red," is a gift of perception, so that he does not find any absurdity here. Perception takes over some of the functions ascribed in the West to a mythical faculty called "reason." Perception grasps particulars as well as universals. From all this it might seem as though the Indian thinkers did not have a concept of "reason." Nothing could be further from the truth. What it rather shows is that the sensory perception is a rational cognition or a *pramāṇa* by which one's cognitions are measured and justified.

In Indian philosophy, the Naiyāyika, besides the sense organs, has a faculty called "*manas*," often translated as "mind," whose primary function in cognition roughly approximates "attending." The contact of the sense organs with the object is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for the production of a perceptual cognition. What is needed in addition is contact between the *manas* and the sense organ. In deep sleep, the *manas* is not in contact with the sense organ and the sense organs are not in contact with the object, and as a result we do not perceive. When we come to Sāṃkhya and Vedānta, representing the *ādhyātmika* philosophies, we encounter a new faculty which does not appear in the Naiyāyika's epistemology. This is called "*buddhi*," at times translated as a sort of Kantian "intellect." *Buddhi*, of Sāṃkhya and Vedānta, however, is a more versatile faculty than *manas*, it takes over the function of judging or *adhyavasāya*, which involves reflection and also some of the functions of willing, that is to say, of both right knowledge and right action. It is as though the senses deliver the data to *buddhi*, *buddhi* processes them, resulting in a

judgment. A comparativist will immediately see that we are back to Kant: sensation gives the intuited data, understanding synthesizes them into a judgment, and we lose the original view of the logician, the Naiyāyika, that the universals are also intuited. But that similarity hides a deep difference. The difference lies in precisely what the sense organs do and in order to develop this last point, I will turn to the account of sensory cognition found in the Advaitic work on epistemology called "*Vedānta Paribhāṣā*."

On the account given by *Vedānta Paribhāṣā*, the Advaitin considers perception as a process in which the inner sense or *antaḥkaraṇa* goes out through the medium of the sense organs and on reaching the object being perceived assumes its form. Note that it is the form that is taken over by the inner sense and there is a consequent identity between the inner sense and the object. This identity, however, is only a formal identity, an identity of form, and not a material identity. The mind does not, to be sure, become a red rose materially, for example, but it assumes the form of the rose. This transformed inner sense lets the consciousness of the knower be reflected in it. This reflection is the cognition of the object. Accordingly, there arises a cognition-of-the-rose through which the rose itself is perceived. Several features of this account must be kept in mind.

1. A content is produced which has the form, "that rose over there."
2. That rose and this content have the same form. Hence, one can call this content and the resulting cognition the *sākāra vijñāna* of the Yogācāra Buddhists.
3. The identity between the content and the object is only with regard to the form and not with regard to the matter. The form of the cognition is a form of the inner sense, but the form of the actual object

out there is a form of the material content. The material contents are not reproduced, only the form is reproduced.

That there is a content of perceptual knowledge distinguished from the object is a thesis which many Western epistemologists subscribe to, but Naiyāyikas in India totally reject it. That the identity achieved by the mind (here I am using mind and the inner sense interchangeably) is a formal identity is a well known doctrine of Aristotle. It is through this content "that rose is red" that the red rose out there is perceived. This is very far from the theory according to which on the basis of the sensory data received, the understanding produces the judgment "that rose is red." The activity of the *buddhi,* is not built up on the basis of sense-perception; it is the process by which that formal identity is made possible. Thus, the resulting picture of perceptual cognition is more Aristotelian than Kantian. Therefore, we can say that the *buddhi* produces perception of the object "that red rose" directly, and not by way of subsuming the data of intuition under the concepts of "red" and "rose"; the thing itself is perceived, not its appearances. In this sense, the *buddhi* as a rational faculty is intuitive, which leads to the next higher stage of rational intuition, made possible by reflection and contemplation on the truths received through "hearing" the texts, i.e., *śabda pramāṇa*. If perception or *pratyakṣa pramāṇa* is an activity of the *buddhi* at a lower level, grasping the metaphysical truths about the self is the consequence of an activity of the *buddhi* at a higher level. On my interpretation, *śruti* or the "heard text" articulates the metaphysical truths about the nature of the self in a more mysterious way than the knowledge of the absolute spirit acquired through a proper understanding of Hegel's *Phenomenology*. Notice that in both cases, the Indian and the Western, the initial knowledge gained by hearing and understanding is still a mediate knowledge of

the metaphysical truth concerned. But this mediate knowledge based on textual understanding needs to be transformed into an immediate knowledge of the same truth. Western philosophy, however, does not make room for this transformation, because *nididhyāsana* does not play any role whatsoever in it.

Philosophical knowledge in the West remains at the level of thinking gained from textual understanding. But the Indian tradition holds that the textual understanding needs to be, and can be, transformed into an intuitive, immediate knowledge (*aparokṣānubhūti*) of the subject matter, in this case, the subject matter being the identity of the *ātman* and the *brahman*. The two steps that make possible this transformation are described as the reflective or analytic consideration or *manana* and contemplation (*nididhyāsana*), the last stage resulting in an intuitive experience of the truth. The thing itself as it were stands before the mind wrapped in contemplation. One trivializes rational intuition by calling it a mystical trance, which it is not. It begins with a proper understanding of its texts of the Upaniṣads, e.g., "*so'ham,*" i.e., "I am that." A perfectly rational consideration (*vicāra*) of this thesis goes through all arguments for and against and removes all occasions for doubt until the *buddhi* focuses upon the truth and this exclusive conception results in an *experience* of the truth. The word "intuition" here means nothing more than an experience in which the object of experience itself is "bodily given" (*leibhaft gegeben*) to use a vivid description by Husserl.

To sum up, Indian epistemologists may begin with a theory of sensory perception as an activity of the sense organs and the mind, then move on to *buddhi's* identification with the object perceived by generating a formal identity, and finally, culminate in an intuitive experience of the truth, a philosophical truth to be sure, not an empirical truth, by a complex process, a rather long and arduous process of

self-cultivation. We have in brief the three stages of reason which were only anticipatorily referred to earlier i.e., which Western philosophy (particularly Hegel) had described inadequately. Reason in its higher reaches has to be intuitive, though in its lower beginnings, it is discursive and conceptual.

Endnotes

1. See *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, edited by E. Hamilton and H. Cairns (Princeton, N. J., Princeton University Press, 1994), pp. 850–906.
2. Plato, *The Republic*, Books VI and VII.
3. *The Works of Aristotle* (eds.), J.A. Smith and W.D. Ross (London: Oxford University press, 1908–1952), "Metaphysics," Book I 1079 b25.
4. *Critique of Pure Reason*, A330 & B380–383.
5. *Ibid.*, A333–8/B390–6.
6. *Ibid.*, A334 & B360.
7. I. Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, translated with an introduction by J. H. Barnard (New York: Hafner Publishing Co., 1966), No. 26. Henceforth this edition will be cited as *Critique of Judgment.*
8. Ibid., p. 93.
9. See Introduction to *Critique of Judgment*.
10. *Ibid.*, Sec. 28, last paragraph.
11. *Phenomenology of Spirit*, the section on "Sense-Certainty: or the 'this' and'Meaning.'"
12. Hegel, *Hegel'sPhilosophy of Right*, translated by T. M. Knox (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), Preface, p. 10.
13. Karl Lowith, *From Hegel to Nietzsche* (New York: Anchor Books, Doubleday & Co., 1967), p. 136.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 137.
15. Hegel, *Science of Logic*, translated by W. H. Johnston and I. G. Struthers (London: Glockner, 1929).

16. Kockelman, *Heid & Science*, CARP and UPA Washington D.C. 1985, 250ff. Also see Kockelman's *On the Truth of Being* (Indiana University Press,1984), p. 88ff.
17. *Was Heisst Denken?*, 91ff.
18. *Was Heisst Denken?* Part II, Lecture I, pp. 100ff; *What is Called Thinking?* Part II, Lecture 11, pp. 229–244.
19. "The *Upaniṣadic* mystical tradition of Indian religious and philosophical thought, by going back to its own unspent origins and opening itself out at the same time to the 'unthought' in that other great beginning in the West can perhaps contribute more substantially towards the preparation of a new dawn than has seemed possible so far." Mehta's *The Philosophy of Martin Heidegger*, p. 254. Also see J. L. Mehta's "Heidegger and the Comparison of Indian and Western Philosophy,"*Philosophy East and West*, Vol. 20 (July 1970), pp. 303–317.
20. *CU*, 8.7.1.
21. Ibid., 8.7.3.
22. Ibid., 8.9.1.
23. Ibid., 8.10.1.
24. Ibid.,8.11.1.
25. Ibid., 8.12.1.6.
26. E. Hussserl, *Formal and Transcendental Logic,* translated by Dorion Cairns (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1969), sections 1, 3, & 4.

Chapter Seven

Experience: East and West

Let me now turn my attention to the concept of "experience" in Western thought. It does not make sense to continue using the Western word "experience" or the German word "*Erfahrung*"[1] without saying something about their usages and functions in Western thought. These usages, I hope, will provide a point of departure to present the relevant aspects of "experience" in Advaita Vedānta thought in particular, and Indian philosophy in general.

I

Main Phases of "Experience" in Western Thought

The *Oxford English Dictionary* explains "experience" "as the state of having been occupied in any study or practice, in affairs or in the intercourse of life; the duration or extent of such occupation; the qualifications thereby acquired."[2] Accordingly, "experienced" signifies "having experience," having become wise or skillful through experience. Thus, in a layperson's language, experience signifies familiarity with matters of practical importance. An experienced swimmer, an experienced doctor, an experienced lawyer, knows his/her profession not by reading books but by practicing under a variety of circumstances. Aristotle in *Posterior Analytics* reinforces this sense of the term "experience," when he notes: " . . . from experience . . .

there comes a principle of skill and of understanding—of skill if it deals with how things come about, of understanding if it deals with what is the case."[3] In this sense, "experience" signifies the ability to do certain things that are based on habit rather than on theoretical understanding. Thus, a swimmer becomes a good swimmer by practicing swimming regularly, a ship builder acquires his ship building skills by building ships, a pianist by practicing playing the piano, and so on.

Notwithstanding the Aristotelian use, even in Western thought, everyday use of the English word, or the German word, does not coincide with the use the philosophers have made of it, and we owe it to such analytic philosophers as Gilbert Ryle, and J. L. Austin, to have drawn our attention to it. Nevertheless, undistracted by that usage, I will restrict myself to the philosophical use or the use by the philosophers of the concept of "experience". I must, however, add that in the Sanskrit tradition, from which I will draw when I come to discuss Indian thought, the ordinary Sanskrit language and the philosophical vocabulary did not diverge that much, possibly (I say, "possibly"), because Sanskrit did not become an ordinary language.

In modern times, the philosophical use of "experience" has become *almost* inseparable from the classification of the epistemological theories into empiricism and rationalism. As a result, "experience" became a central term in the discipline of philosophy known as theory of knowledge, and began functioning as one of the sources of knowledge or one of the ways of knowing. I say "almost" because I suspect, in this matter the German word "*Erfahrung*" is more versatile, because it not only expresses an epistemological concept but also a much more expansive concept especially found, so far as I know, in Hegel's phenomenology. It is important to remember in this context that the philosophical concept of experience is inseparable from its

opposite, i.e., the concept of "reason." The two, whether as dialectical opposites, or as mutual supplements that one finds in Kant's account, may almost be said to define each other: one is what the other is not. So if our inquiry yields the comforting result that in Sanskrit "*anubhava*" or "*anubhūti*" we have almost exact synonyms of the word "experience," then that initial feeling of comfort is upset when we remember that we cannot find a synonym of "reason" in Sanskrit with the same assurance. Additionally, we cannot but ask ourselves whether the Indian and the Western concepts of "experience" are really the same, almost the same, if the contrast between reason and experience is not available in the Indian tradition, a contrast which one finds in the Western context. The point that I am trying to make may be formulated in the question form as follows: If a concept of "experience" in which its distinction from reason is *internal* is called "experience," and a concept of "experience" in which the contrast with reason is *external* is also called "experience," then are these two concepts the same? Alternately, does it not necessarily follow that these two concepts of "experience" are different? This question indeed will play a very important role in the discussion that ensues.

The issues, however, are not really as simple as the above question might suggest even in Western philosophy. A consideration of David Hume, one of the most well known exponents of empiricism, helps to make this point abundantly clear. Hume formulates the central principle of empiricism without an internal contrast with rationalism.[4] Whereas the central concept of rationalism is that of the "idea" or "thought," Hume makes the concept of "*impression*" central in his empiricist theory of knowledge, and, by the term "impression," he means "all our lively perceptions, when we hear, or see, or feel, or love, or hate, or desire, or will."[5] All our ideas, argues Hume, are copies

of impressions.[6] He defines ideas as "less lively" or "less forcible," merely faded impressions so that the two, viz., impressions and ideas, differ not in quality but in the degree of "force and vivacity" with which they strike upon the mind.[7] In Hume, there is no concept of "reason" with which "experience" is contrasted; consequently, we find a concept of "experience" separate and independent from the traditional concept of "reason." As a result, it does not seem to be true that Hume's concept of "experience" is defined in the context of an *internal* contrast with reason, and what may be regarded by the rationalists as the domain of reason or thought is completely appropriated into the domain of impressions gradually receding from their original impact and becoming less and less lively and forceful, and becoming more removed from their origin but nevertheless remaining tied to that origin. We must not forget that according to Hume all "our ideas or more feeble perceptions," are "copies" of impressions.[8] Thus, the complete sovereignty of experience that does not permit any opposition to reason is matched on the rationalist side by an equally radical sovereignty of reason, which reduces experience to be a faint copy of thought, reversing the order of priority, which we find in Leibniz. Just as for Hume ideas are "faint copies" of impressions, for Leibniz, sensations are ideas that are confused. The sovereignty of "experience" in Hume is matched by the sovereignty of "reason" in Leibniz. As a result, it does not seem conceptually necessary to define one in terms of the other, i.e., reason in terms of experience and *vice versa*, as I had initially suspected.

Experience in Hume's analysis consists in its most fundamental layer, of impressions ordered by the laws of association, and thus forms various kinds of unities and connections. An impression, as Hume conceives it, is produced in the mind by an internal or external object impacting on it. An impression of X is produced by X.

Accordingly, an impression of red is produced by red. The production of impressions, the three laws of their association, and their gradual fading out by their being transformed into what he calls "ideas" are both events and processes *within the world*, which can be called "mundane" processes. They are events within the world, yet at the same time Hume ascribes to them a transcendental function of constituting the fundamental concepts in terms of which we describe the world. To illustrate with an example, the concept of causal connection is one of the fundamental concepts in terms of which we describe the world. Hume shows how this concept arises from the way the impressions are organized and associated. Yet, he describes an impression in that very causal language by stating that the impression of X is produced, i.e., caused by X. I would therefore draw the attention of my readers to the almost paradoxical nature of a Humean impression: it is a mundane event insofar as the laws of association describe how impressions get connected and organized, but the same impressions also play a transcendental role of making the concepts possible in terms of which we describe the world. I do not want to say that Hume was aware of this double nature of impressions. However, a close study of his writings shows that this consequence is unavoidable. As mundane, an impression is caused. As transcendental, an impression is untraceable back to a cause; it is the absolute first in order of explanation. As mundane, an impression of X is caused by X; but as transcendental the "of" in "the impression of X" stands for an intentional structure within an impression and not for a causal link to the world. The double nature of the Humean impression shows itself in Kant's two-level account of the laws of association. As belonging to the empirical world there is an empirical association, but as constituting the world that association is transcendental.

Thus, while Hume's concept of "experience" is internally divided against itself, it has also generated on the one hand a false psychological atomism (according to which mental life consists of impressions), and, on the other hand, an explanation of experience in terms of a causal story of how sensations (of modern physiological psychology) arise by the impact of physical stimuli upon the physiological sensory receptors. Both accounts have been severely criticized by recent psychological (e.g., Gestalt Psychologists) and phenomenological theories of perception (e.g., theories of Merleau Ponty and Husserl).

The Humean concept of experience is responsible for Kant's use of the German word "*Erfahrung*" in two different senses.[9] In the opening section of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant explains "*Erfahrung*" as that which is caused or produced by things by affecting the faculty of sensibility. But he also uses—the use that has important ramifications for his theory of knowledge—"experience" as perceptions connected by what he calls the "analogies of experience," which include principles of substance, causality, and reciprocity. In the former sense, experience is a Humean impression deprived of its internal ambiguous structure designated by the word "of" in "impression of X." It is simply a sensation, not a sensation of anything. Kant calls it an internal representation, but it is not a representation of something. Intentionality first appears when the bare impression is referred to by the mind to something outside in space. Though called "a representation," it is not yet a representation of something. This is the first Kantian sense; but the full-fledged Kantian sense of "experience" is of course an interconnected system of perceptions, which is constituted of sensations, intuitions, and concepts.[10] It is in the second sense that Kant uses his famous and often misunderstood expression "a possible experience." This connected series of perceptions ordered by "the analogies

of experience" constitute an open-ended system, which is his reconstruction of the idea of the "world," and which the natural sciences explore. Thus, the Kantian experience in the full-fledged sense includes what is brought to light by physics. Physics, we may say, is continuous with experience.

There is, however, an opposition between reason and experience that continues perhaps in Kant who, for the first time, established the opposition between reason and experience to be irreducible to the duality between the faculties of sensibility and understanding, *Sinnlichkeit* and *Verstand,* respectively. The first presents intuitive contents and intuitions, the second supplies concepts. They cannot take over each other's roles; though both together, through the faculty of imagination (*Einbildungskraft*), make possible experience in the complete sense. The opposition between the two faculties remains, yet in a strange way covered up within the unity of what they together accomplish, namely, experience. This opposition, he argues, is not one of degrees but of quality, thereby possibly restoring the Platonic imagery of the "Divided Line."[11] Additionally, Kant also regarded each concept incomplete without the other, each performing a different, though incomplete service to the cause of knowledge and each requiring the other. So when I noted earlier that in Western thought the concept of experience needs the concept of reason as its other, and wondered whether such a contrast is available in the Indian thought, I was perhaps thinking of Kant, not so much of Hume, better yet, let me add, I was thinking more of "*Erfahrung*" rather than of "experience."

It seems to me that the Kantian framework still provides the fundamental framework for modern Western thinking on experience. Experience, for contemporary Western thinkers, is also something that is given, to which our interpretations are added. We do not speak today of the

Kantian *a priori* framework of conceptual synthesis; we rather speak of the modes of interpretations which are relative to cultures and languages. Thus, the basic dualism between reason and experience still continues.

In Hegel's *Phenomenology*, experience is first understood as "sensuous experience" as the givenness of an external object. Hegel discusses this point in the chapter on "Sensible Certainty."[12] Hegel argues that consciousness cannot remain at this level of knowledge because upon reflection it is immediately transcended by another mode of knowing, namely, perception of a physical object. The sensible certainty is constantly changing from moment to moment; it is now the daytime and later it turns into the night time. The object of perceptual knowledge likewise is always provisional and cannot be fixed permanently. New objects come into being as new forms of consciousness emerge. Just as sensuous certainty is replaced by perception, similarly perception is replaced by scientific thought. Perceptual objects are no longer objects of scientific thoughts; imperceptible atoms and forces become their objects. Thus, consciousness is caught up in a dialectical process in which it ever ascends to higher and higher forms and also generates different forms of objects. It becomes the practical consciousness of other subjects and seeks to assert its own freedom by dominating the other. Thus, begins a quest for freedom, which Hegel pursues passionately until he arrives at the modern conception of history. It is by reflection on this dialectical process of the development of consciousness and its object that Hegel was able to derive his own distinctive concept of "experience." Rather than following Kant, he comes to define "experience" in his own terms. Experience is the reflection on how a new object arises in the course of the development of consciousness. This is the meaning of experience or *Erfahrung* in the original title of his book: *The Science of the Experience of Consciousness*. This

experience is historical; it eventually coincides with the historical process by which the absolute spirit comes to know itself. Philosophy thus becomes a dialectical pursuit of the spirit in its search for self-knowledge, better yet, freedom. This is experience, and it is easy to see how Hegel, starting from his Kantian roots, arrived at this point.

Thus, whereas Kant went back to the everyday use of this word "*Erfahrung*" as the receptivity of the sensibility but within an epistemological context, Hegel left the ordinary usage and developed a philosophical theory of experience, and experience for him is not merely a necessary condition of the possibility of theoretical knowledge, but also a self-development of consciousness to carry out the project of making the metaphysical and spiritual concept of the absolute immanent in human experience.

Before coming now to the contemporary times, I should also briefly mention a peculiar use of the word "*Erfahrung*" that one finds in Hegel's phenomenology. In his picture of the development of consciousness, as a new form of consciousness emerges out of the old one, Hegel calls this experience "the experience of consciousness." In other words, consciousness experiences its own history. Thus, it is not surprising that the original title that Hegel gave to his book was not *Phenomenology of Spirit*, but the *Science of the Experience of Consciousness*. Such a usage has some resonance with the Advaitic view, one could say, as consciousness corrects its immersion in the mundane world and realizes its true nature as transcendent, it has a new experience of itself.

In his *Holzwege*,[13] Heidegger discusses Hegel's use of the word "*Erfahrung*." He explains what Hegel means by "*Erfahrung*," by saying that it is the dialectical movement, which consciousness exercises upon itself so that the new object, which is its truth, arises out of it. According to Heidegger, *Erfahrung* is the Being of beings, the appearance

qua appearing, an entity in its being-ness. Experience is not here the name of a certain kind of knowing. It is the name for Being insofar as this Being is thought from the perspective of entities. The verb *"fahren"* in *"Erfahrung"* signifies the original sense of "to draw." Experience is the way consciousness is drawn towards its concept, which is its truth.[14] *Erfahrung* is the conversation between natural consciousness and absolute knowledge.

Moving now to Husserl who, in his book *Experience and Judgment*, develops the thesis that all forms of formal logic, the forms of judgment, are founded on a pre-predicative logic, in Hegel's words, in an original partition (or *Teilung*). On the basis of this original partition arise the forms of judgment. With this, Husserl avoids two misunderstandings: on the one hand, he rejects the psychologistic understanding of logic as a function of the human mind, the laws of thought must not be understood as mental functions, and the thinking is more than the mere sum of these functions. Thinking has contents, which are always ideal. Psychology, in order to explain the mental moments, must be freed from its own empirical presuppositions and methods; that is to say, from its claim to be an empirical science. The relation of psychology and logic must also be properly understood. Formal logic is concerned only with the forms of the contents of thinking, that is to say, with the forms of the propositions. Husserl also rejects a one-sided understanding of the relation between subjectivity and objectivity. It is often noted that in his discussion of experience, Husserl lays stress on perception. This only shows that, for him, the object does not simply emerge out of subjectivity, but was already there before I perceived it. This explains why Husserl took his theory of perception to be a transcendental theory. The object is not simply received into an empty consciousness as impressions, nor are they simply synthesized to constitute

the world. The thesis of intentionality meant for him that neither consciousness nor object could be understood apart from the other. To every form of consciousness, there corresponds a form of objectivity and *vice versa*. The constitution of an object always takes place against the background of the total horizon of the world.

Husserl's thought, as formulated in his *Ideas* I,[15] interests me as holding a synthesis of reason and experience. For expounding his view, I will turn to the last part of the *Ideas* I, and to J. N. Mohanty's commentary on it to be found in the recently published work on Husserl.[16] Rational consciousness, Husserl holds, in the long run, is insightful seeing, or self-evidence.[17] To every object that "truly is" there intrinsically corresponds . . . the idea of a possible consciousness in which the object itself can be grasped in a primordial and perfectly adequate way.[18] Rationality requires that we are able to *demonstrate* the object of knowledge in intuition. A new concept of reason closer to the Platonic concept is established, even with special application to logic and mathematics. I hold that this concept of "reason" intimately tied to "experience" in a rather broadened sense pervades Indian thought as I have continued to argue in this book.

II

Anubhava and Western Philosophical Discourse

How does this account of experience compare with the leading Western accounts? Given that the idea of *anubhava* in Indian philosophy and the idea of experience in Western thinking entail or imply a certain immediacy and directness of apprehension, as opposed to mere conceptual thinking that is indirect and mediate, it might seem that *anubhava* and experience coincide in their meaning. However, one should not jump to any hasty conclusions on this score,

and let me pause briefly to recall the Humean bit of experience called "impression." In Western philosophy if one takes the standard empiricist view as formulated by David Hume, "experience" means receiving impressions which are then connected together in accordance with the laws of association.

An impression in Hume is always an impression *of* something, and the preposition "of" is ambiguous insofar as it could be construed either causally meaning thereby that an impression of X is an impression which is produced by X, or taken in an intentional sense meaning thereby that the impression of X has X as an internal objective constituent of that impression. Both interpretations are supported by Hume's text and point to the double-edged nature of his impressions. When we contrast this with the Advaitic *anubhava*, we find that an *anubhava* of X is neither caused by X, irrespective of whether X is a pitcher, or a table, or the *brahman*, nor is X (the object of *anubhava)* an intentional constituent of the *anubhava*. On the Advaitic view, the *anubhava* itself is not caused, despite the assertion of Śaṃkara that all the *pramāṇas* culminate in *anubhava*. The culmination is not a causal bringing about. What is caused is the destruction of ignorance concealing the object.[19] With the destruction of ignorance by the *pramāṇas* combined together, the object stands manifested and that manifestation is *anubhava*. The object is not a constituent of, or in the technical language of Indian philosophers, not an *ākāra* of an *anubhava*; the *anubhava* itself has no *ākāra*, accordingly, the locution *anubhava* "of X" has to be construed very differently from the locution "impression of X."

Let us pursue the difference between the Humean impressions and the Advaitic *anubhava* a little further. The impression is certainly a mental occurrence; it is subjective, as contrasted with the objects in the world that are objective.

While this sense of the subjectivity is difficult to explicate, and in the present context, I do not wish to do so, one can use a more philosophically neutral, though not unambiguous term, and say that an impression is mental. An *anubhava* is not mental. When I say of a Humean impression that I had an impression of X, the impression literally belonged to me. It is literally true that the impression was produced in me by something outside of me. Thus, the Humean impression is not only mental but the entire story of "its" genesis is tied to a certain metaphysics of the outer and the inner and a causal relation between the two. Although one can and does say that Śrī Rāmkrishna (an Advaitin) had *anubhava* of the *brahman*, or when one wants to say that she had an *anubhava* of a pitcher, while those locutions are true they are not literally true, because though an *anubhava* so expressed is sought to be located in time as an event in the world, that *anubhava* as the manifestation of a reality is not an event in time produced by a causal process or located within the psycho-physical unity of a perception. It is not within me nor was the *anubhava* within Śrī Rāmakrishna's mental life. It refuses to be located in the world. While the Humean impression was found to be ambiguous between an empirical and a transcendental reading, the Advaitic *anubhava* as *brahmasvarūpa* is purely transcendental; it is not an empirical occurrence; *anubhava* as *brahmaviṣayaka* has an empirical element (i.e., the *brahman* as an object of *anubhava*). Here ordinary descriptions (e.g., Śrī Rāmakrishna had such an *anubhava* of the *brahman* at such and such date and at such an hour), ascriptions (e.g., *anubhava* was of Śrī Rāmakrishna), and causal connections (the *anubhava* was hastened by the blessing of his *Guru*) are or may be true; they are not literally true, because all such accounts tend to transform what is transcendental into something empirical.

Looking beyond the empiricists to Kant, we find that Kant uses the word "experience" or *Erfahrung* in three different senses:

(1) at times it is used to mean simply having sensations;

(2) more often, he means by it perception of a physical object which involves synthesis of sensations by bringing them under concepts; and

(3) he also takes it to mean a systematic interconnection of perceptions leading to science.

Thus, from sensation to physics, experience is in the process of developing. In reviewing the Advaitic view of experience expounded above, we discern that for the Advaitin experience is not the Humean impression nor is it the same as the three Kantian senses outlined above, although Kant's identification of experience with perception seems to have a similarity with the Advaitin view. However, in this context, one must not lose sight of the fact that Kant not only regarded experience as outer perception of physical objects, but also extended it to mean perception of one's own mental states by what he calls "the inner sense." The so-called Kantian inner sense has many problems associated with it including the problem of self-affection. For our present purposes, it is sufficient to noṭe that the inner sense is conceived by Kant as analogous to the outer sense. The Advaitins also regard the inner sense (*antaḥkaraṇa*) as a sense, and in any perception of an external object the inner sense is involved, very much like the involvement of the inner sense in the Kantian outer perception. The Advaitins, however, regard the modification of the inner sense as a *vṛtti* which is directly manifested by the witness-consciousness. As a result, the Advaitins do not get involved in the Kantian problem of self-affection. The relation between the outer and the inner senses is certainly as difficult to construe as is the relation between the external sense organs and the *antaḥkaraṇa* in the Indian systems.

Thus, whereas the concept of experience in Western philosophy is very much tied to a concept of subjectivity, in the Advaita Vedānta epistemology it is freed from any kind of subjectivity. One may still argue that the alleged transcendentality does not signify anything except a deeper level of subjectivity. There is some merit in this argument, however, in order to appreciate the point that *anubhava* signifies a deeper level of subjectivity, the subjectivity in the mundane sense of belonging to someone's mind is denied to it. The precise sense of subjectivity in the context of the Advaitic concepts of "*cit*" and "*anubhava*" is very difficult to determine because although transcendental[20] they are always, almost necessarily, because of the human situation, liable to be corrupted by intrusions of the empirical. We must learn to tread very carefully the "razor's edge" which is the borderline between the empirical and the transcendental. The standard Advaitic theory of knowledge outlined above clearly exemplifies this point.

Thus, setting up an opposition between conceptual and discursive thought on the one hand and a non-discursive intuitive experience on the other, which is common in the writings of the many interpreters of Advaita Vedānta, does not do justice to the subtleties of Advaita epistemology. A full discussion of this issue will require a discussion of the question, what is the concept of "concept" in Indian thought, specifically in Advaita Vedānta. When intuition is opposed to concept, or intuitive experience to discursive thinking, or even when such concepts as intellectual intuition are introduced into the discussion, one is inevitably moving in the terrain opened up by such great Western thinkers as Plato, Kant, and Hegel. But do we find these contrasts in Advaita Vedānta epistemology? There is no doubt a contrast between *parokṣa* and *aparokṣa anubhava* but that distinction must be correctly understood and not mixed up with the concept-intuition distinction. The idea of

conceptual mediation, with all its attendant epistemological implications, for example, a certain part of constructivism such that the object is constructed by concepts, is absent in the fundamental realism of Hindu thought. The only trace of the productive role of concept, if anywhere in Indian thought, is found in the Buddhist philosophies. The unavailability of concepts corresponds to, as I pointed out earlier, the unavailability of the concept of "reason" as opposed to "experience." That is why importing the idea of intuition into the Advaita Vedānta thought is guilty of a very subtle mistake. The lack of mediation in *brahmānubhava* or its *aparokṣatā,* is lack of conceptual mediation; concepts do not play any role in any case. The lack of mediation rather is the loss of the mediation of a *vṛtti,* i.e., a cognitive process. Let me reiterate: the opposition between reason and experience, or what is a specific exemplification of it, i.e., the opposition between concept and intuition, is an internal opposition by which each member is defined in terms of what the other is not and one cannot keep one in the absence of the other to contrast with.

Coming to more contemporary times, I would only mention Husserlian phenomenology. There are two aspects of it that are relevant for our present purposes. Husserl recognizes intentionality as fundamental to consciousness. Whereas in the naive, mundane self-understanding, consciousness finds the world as pre-given, this natural point of view is abolished through phenomenological discovery that the world is after all an accomplishment of the intentionality of consciousness. This is a new experience in the above-mentioned Hegelian sense. Husserl at times calls it "transcendental self-experience." Husserl also makes much use of a distinction I have used earlier in this work, i.e., the distinction between *Erfahrung* and *Erlebnis*. As *Erfahrung* consciousness is *of* the world; it is intentional and also world-constituting. But as *Erlebnis,* it is also self-aware,

presented to itself or in the Advaitic language *svayaṃprakāśa*. Despite this similarity, Husserl's thought moves in a direction in which the Advaitic thought does not. This is due to Husserl's emphasis on the temporality of consciousness. Both as *Erfahrung* and as *Erlebnis*, consciousness is temporal. This temporality seriously compromised Husserl's belief that consciousness can be reflectively self-aware, because if consciousness is a flow, what we are reflectively aware of, has already passed, and the claim of consciousness to be self-manifesting comes to be seriously questioned. The Advaitin does not place consciousness in time and so does not face that problem which would otherwise have arisen in his view. Let us only recall that it is the Buddhist alone, among the Indian philosophies, who compares consciousness to a flow, a flow of *Erlebnisse*, each one of which is instantaneous. The Buddhist thus faces the Husserlian problems as well as his own problem of the possibility of self-experience.

III

To explain further what I am trying to get at, I will organize the discussion under four problems in light of which the question of "experience" in East and West may be discussed.

These are:

1. the relation of experience to objectivity;
2. the question of my experience of my self;
3. the question of how far experience can comprehend transcendence; and
4. the relation between experience and language.

To begin with 1, we must keep in mind that there is a global thought tradition that makes a distinction between subject and object, although the precise interpretation of this distinction varies from one tradition to another.

However, if we accept this distinction, then the question arises: how does this acceptance affect the objectivity of experience? Kant provides one dominant response to the first question in the history of Western thought by stating that the conditions of the possibility of experience are also the conditions of the possibility of the object.[21] The categories and the forms of space and time make possible a continuity and unity of experience and carve out of experience a coherent whole of objectivity. These categories also constitute the world of possible experience. However, there immediately arises a question, which Kant does not ask and Husserl does, namely, is my experience also the same as experience of others or of all? Kant had no anxiety about this question because for him the ego or the I, as a thinker, is also a thinker of the world, that is to say, a universal thinker, thereby dissolving the opposition between my experience and those of the others. Universal experience, though one, is individualized, but at the same time, it is also universalized; this, in short, is the Kantian point of view. This answer, however, does not satisfy Husserl. He locates within experience the structure of intentionality as the relation between *noesis* and *noema*, between the private experience and the publicly shared content. These *noemata* are objective, and out of their interaction identity of an object is carved out, even if each subject's experiences are different.

This question (how does experience acquire its objectivity) owes its importance to the fact that experience is taken to be subjective, i.e., belonging to the mental life of the one who experiences. Whether it is sensing or perceiving it is an event in someone's mental life. If that is so, how does it come about that it has an objective reference, that we not only experience our own mental processes, but also something out there in the world independently of my experiencing? What makes possible this relation to an object?

Kantian transcendental idealism stated above holds that the conditions of the possibility of experience are also the conditions of the possibility of object. The object is constituted by the forms and categories of the human mind which also make experience possible. Consequently, it is no wonder that experience is of an object. Indian philosophers, as well as many Western philosophers, e.g., Hegel and Husserl, challenge the Kantian answer.

The Indian thinkers respond to these problems with a different orientation. The unity of the nature and the self gives rise to natural consciousness, and, as a result, to the diversity of the empirical world. In the Sāṁkhya system, for example, the question arises whether each individual *puruṣa* lives in its own world. The answer seems to be that the world for each subject has a different meaning and significance so that I, as this empirical subject, enjoy my world. The *prakṛti* as an absolute other to the *puruṣa* is reached only in the state of *kaivalya,* but as consisting of three *guṇas,* its reference to the *puruṣa's* interest is intrinsic. How then is the *prakṛti,* even as unmanifest, completely objective and transcendent? However, in this plurality of standpoints, a common world is also contained which is the same for all subjects.

The Indian philosophers in particular in their theories of knowledge have committed themselves, to a sort of realism, according to which, the object of knowledge is independent of the act of knowing. The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika comes close to recognizing that in true cognitions (even in untrue cognitions) one apprehends a mind-independent object. Yet the object is said to be both knowable and expressible. The Vedānta, especially Advaita, recognizes the object (in perception and *pramāṇasaṃplava*) only as a content of *vṛtti,* and the question of an object in the strong sense remains a problem.

Beyond this realism, the Nyāya and the Advaita greatly differ in their accounts of empirical knowledge or experience. On the Advaita theory, experience (i.e., perception) of an object takes place when the inner sense, say, in the case of visual perception, through the medium of the visual sense organ, assumes the form of the object. The transformation is called "*vṛtti*" or a modality in which the inner sense or the mental has the same form as the object perceived. The *vṛtti* thus establishes a kind of contact with the object and when the *vṛtti* is manifested by *cit*, then the object is also perceived. Thus, the perceptual experience is founded upon a formal identity between the mind and the object. This account explains how the object perceived is given to consciousness. But it does not explain nor does it problematize, how the pure mind-independent, object is presented in consciousness. The Advaita in its theory of perception deals with the object only as the known object, but not with the object as such. Let me add here that in order to deal with the object in itself the Advaita brings in the notion of not knowing (*ajñāna*) so that what is called the object *per se*, beyond what is known, is for the Advaitin the object as unknown (*ajñātavastu*). But the object as unknown also requires the witness-consciousness of unknownness or of ignorance. Thus, the Advaita makes the object *per se* also an object of consciousness. As known, it is an object of a *vṛtti* or modality of the mind; as unknown, it is an object of witness-consciousness directly.

Thus, the Advaita claims to have a complete theory of object in itself, and the epistemological realism is perfectly presented. The Naiyāyikas, however, have a problem on their hands, viz., how to reconcile their basic realism (the thesis that all objects are mind-independent with their further thesis "whatever is, is knowable"). Recently, Daya Krishna drew our attention to the question whether by holding the latter the Naiyāyika's thesis compromised his

former thesis of realism.[22] Various attempts have been made to resolve this seeming contradiction. One way of resolving the contradiction is by arguing that the Naiyāyikas, in their thesis ("whatever is, is knowable"), are really asserting "everything that exists is *knowable*." They do not hold that everything that is, *is* an object of knowledge. An object is knowable only if all the conditions of its knowledge are satisfied. That however is not always the case. We do not in reality perceive things that are very far or too small, although the Naiyāyikas leave open the possibility that there is a mode of perceiving not given to us but to the *yogis* where such objects can also be perceived. Also, it must be noted that the Naiyāyikas, in holding the view that everything is knowable, are not arguing that everything is perceivable, rather that everything can be an object of a *pramā* or true knowledge. *Dharma* and *adharma*, e.g., are not perceivable, but are determined *by śabda pramāṇa*, and in that sense knowable.

Husserl's solution is different. He sees the problem as how the subjectivity of experiencing is compatible with the objectivity of what is experienced. To resolve this problem, he takes recourse to a concept of "intentionality." Experiencing is no doubt a "subjective act" in his language (using "act" in a special sense), but the act is an intentional act and all intentionality originating from an ego reaches out to an object. There are thus two aspects of intentionality, the subjective act and the meaning or *noema* as its correlate. This *noema* or meaning is not a real component of any subjective experience. It is itself objective while also making possible the relation to a mind-independent object. In other words, the subjective experience refers to an object by virtue of the structure of intentionality, which pervades mental life. Neither the realist nor the idealist exactly perceives this structure; experience is intentional, not merely subjective.

We not only experience the world of objects, but we also experience our own selves, and if we remain at the level of pre-reflective naivety—I would even say that we experience other selves as well. Let me first focus on my experience of my self. The issue of my experience of my own self has puzzled philosophers. If a philosopher is operating with "a restricted conception of experience," then she would unavoidably reduce all experiences to some combination or other of sense-impressions. But there obviously are no sensory impressions, which constitute my experience of my self. Furthermore, sensory impressions are received and so require that the self is affected by an other, as Kant clearly saw. One then must ask, who is affecting my self, if I am to have an experience of my self?

Kant consistently enough was led to the thesis of self-affection: I affect my self. But this thesis, as Kantian scholars know, raised a hornet's nest of problems. Above all, it reduces my knowledge of my self to a phenomenal knowledge, which is the case with my knowledge of the external world. I do not know my own noumenal self. As is well known, Kant looked at our moral experience of pure willing for the knowledge of the noumenal self. So, he came to the famous conclusion that I have practical knowledge of my pure self, but theoretical knowledge of how I appear to my self. Clearly, this position was a compromise and hardly satisfactory. If I do not know my self in any theoretical contemplation, then why admit the noumenal reality of the self at all? Why not rather hold, like Hume and the Buddhists did, that there is no such identity? For this reason, many of Kant's successors, rejected Kant's unquestioned restriction of "experience" to sensory impression, and instituted the requirement that we as humans can intuit something only when we are affected by it. From these premises it seems to follow that we as humans do not posses any intellectual intuition. It is

precisely in self-knowledge that Fichte and Schelling found evidence of non-sensuous intellectual intuition. Hegel accepted this in the long run, but only as the end-point of the development of human cognitive achievements. The lowest form of experience is exemplified in sensory perception founded on simple impressions. But our cognitive abilities are not exhausted by it. True self-knowledge comes about with the knowledge of the truths of the world and other selves, which precisely Hegel sought to capture in absolute knowledge and the Advaitins in *aparokṣānubhūti,* however much, the two might differ.

We begin, one might say, with the sense of "I" in such immediate judgments as "I am happy" or "I am in pain," and one may elevate such an experience as embodying or signifying the final metaphysical knowledge of my self. This is what the Naiyāyikas tend to do. For the Advaitin, knowledge of self as signified by the first person pronoun "I," is simply the beginning, nothing more than that. It points to an entire realm of objectivity to be explored, an entire possibility of cognition to be secured. The common sense use of "I" is not free from ambiguities, which as metaphysicians we cannot accept as Śaṃkara clearly points out, I not only say "I am thin," "I am blind," thereby ascribing to the self properties of the body, but I also say "I am thinking," which cannot be ascribed to the body. Hence arise conceptions of "I" which apply not only to the body, but also to the person. In other words, I know my self then as a person.[23] But only knowledge of my self as a person, well founded and defensible though it is, soon exhibits itself as inalienably connected with my knowledge of other persons. Although I may not know all other persons who contribute to my being, to what I am, yet I am familiar with the community, the culture, the language, each of which constitute my being, give me my concrete content, and make up my total self-knowledge, as articulated in judgments "I

am an Indian," "I am a German," "I speak Hindi," "I am a Hindu by practice," etc. Thus, my knowledge of my self and my knowledge of other selves are inseparable and our questions 2 & 3 mingle together.

Notwithstanding this mingling, let me still try to answer the third question, To begin with, we must not lose sight of the fact that the idea of experience not only in Advaita Vedānta, but also in Sāṃkhya account is inseparable from the principle of ignorance. Since, according to Advaita Vedānta, the *brahman* is in every experience in as much as the *brahman* is pure consciousness, experience can also apprehend the *brahman*. According to Advaita Vedānta thesis, the *brahman* transcends the world but is limited by ignorance in order to make mundane experience possible. However, in this context, I am emphasizing the immanence of the *brahman* inasmuch as experience is consciousness, requiring that we distinguish between objectivity and transcendence.

"Transcendence" means what is outside of the act of experiencing. We can say that this domain of transcendence falls into two large subsets: the world of other subjects and the world of objects which would include things and objects of all kinds, e.g., numbers and other abstract entities. This great divide determines the distinction between questions one and two. In question one, I was concerned with the experience of objects, in the second question with how we experience our selves and other subjects. Taken together, I am trying to determine the relation of my experiencing to what transcends it. Following Husserl I would bring these two together under the rubric of intentionality, a concept that seeks to capture the relation between subject and object in its uniqueness. What is important is that we keep in mind the intentionality that understands another subjectivity; I do not understand another person in seeing his body but in an experience of empathy with his mental processes and

consequently by understanding him. Unlike other objects, the other subject is not simply given in front of me; it speaks to me, addresses me, and I try to empathize with him by understanding him. But that also, i.e., empathy based on understanding, is as much a mode of experiencing transcendence, as is any sensory perception.

Regarding question 4 let me begin by recalling that according to some Hindu philosophers, notably Bhartṛhari, all experience is linguistic. Buddhist philosophers reject this position because they believe in the possibility of a pure, nonlinguistic experience. As a result of this opposition between the Hindu grammarians and the Buddhists, the contrast between the non-linguistic and the linguistic experience became a central theme of Indian epistemologies. The Nyāya and the Advaitins, for example, recognize two kinds of perceptions: linguistic, conceptual, and non-linguistic, non-conceptual, but as discussed earlier, they understand each differently.

So far, I have traced schematically the path of self-knowledge from a naive, egoistic sense of "I" to a recognition of my relationship to a community and to others. But this path does not end here. Communities depend upon others; my self-knowledge is inseparable from a sense of humanity, and one ending with a Leibnizian kind of monadology. But this too can only be a half way place from where self-knowledge has to travel to the goal of being all in me and my self in all beings.

In discussing question four, we encounter the greatest difficulty on this path to the unification of spirits. Since my self-knowledge is tied up with my community, it seems to be inextricably tied to the language I speak. The same also characterizes my experience of objects. I articulate my experience as much by the egoistic expression "I," as by the name I give to the object, saying something like "that flower is red." Tying so closely experience with language seems to

threaten the concept of "experience," and gives rise to a linguistic or conceptual relativism. We learn, for example, from Shapiro, who jointly proposed the hypothesis that it is the language which we speak which determines how we cut out the world into different entities. The Hopi Indians perceive the world as consisting of events rather than of things, as contrasted with Indo Europeans who cut out the world into distinguishable things with properties. This is not the place to discuss in detail this most fascinating hypothesis regarding the relation between language and how we perceive things. But even conceding this, we can say that things in the world no doubt depend on language but our experiencing points in the direction of the realm of subjectivity which is what concerns me here. When we direct our attention to the world outside the domain of subjectivity, the experience of experiencing like the experience of speaking, takes place. Here again, language may be used to describe it, as in the sentences like "I am experiencing an intense toothache," but the experiencing itself always exceeds the linguistic expression so that there is always a non-linguistic experience of experiencing which, as it were, stands behind the linguistic expression. This is what the Buddhists call "*svasaṁvedana*," and the Advaitins call "*svaprakāśa*." I am trying to pierce through this tapestry of language after language and reach this ever-present consciousness that in itself is not linguistic.

This Advaitic insight that consciousness always transcends language, and language always seeks to encompass it, I contrast with the Heideggerian understanding of experience and language. Heidegger, as is well known, held the view that language makes the manifestation of the Being and beings possible. To underscore this position, Heidegger in his letter on humanism says: "it is not that we think with the help of language," rather "it is language that thinks through us."[24]

Here we can also introduce one of the Husserl's theses in the *sixth Logical Investigation* where Husserl writes: "seeing an inkpot as an inkpot is to *see* it as having the *name* inkpot."[25] In other words, we experience, as though an identity, between the name and the named; the name seems to clothe the named.

This extreme position, however well intended (I recognize its truth), fails to take into account a dimension of the subjective life in which the experiencing itself is never captured by linguistic description or even naming but always announces its presence by its self-manifesting nature. Thus, I wish to recognize two dimensions of experience. (1) The dimension of contents which belongs to the world and is determined by how language divides up the world, (2) the dimension of pure subjectivity which is never captured by linguistic net and which always recedes to the background by any attempt to objectify.

The thesis of the identity of the name and the named is also of great deal of importance for the Hindu religious practitioners of the Vaiṣṇava school insofar as they believe that singing the name of Kṛṣṇa might culminate in the experience of God directly and immediately. Thus, the question of the linguisticality of experience was of considerable importance in Indian philosophical and religious thinking. In general, one could say that the Hindu thinkers placed a great deal of emphasis on language (especially on Sanskrit) as reflecting the nature of reality whereas the Buddhists suspected the intrusion of language as distorting the purity of experience. The Advaitic notion of *śabdajanyāparokṣajñāna*, that is, "immediate experience brought about by *śabda*" is the Advaitic version as well as the recognition of the role of language in the process leading to liberation (*mokṣa*). Classical Advaita does not admit the possibility of gradual liberation (*krama mukti*), i.e., does not believe in liberation to be achieved in stages. On the other

hand, many systems of Yoga recognize stages of spiritual progress, including the possibility of retrogression. According to Advaita Vedānta, if primal ignorance is destroyed by knowledge, there is no falling back. Inspite of this thesis, descriptions of such spiritual experiences as the Buddha's own experience describe various stages of experience.

At this juncture, one may ask: how far is the act of knowing a participation in the absolute, keeping in mind the ancient thesis of participating in *Nous*? It is worth remembering that every act of knowing may be construed as a sort of participating in the nature of the *brahman*, insofar as the *brahman* is *jñānasvarūpa*, i.e., of the nature of knowledge. But knowing always has a complex structure whereas the *brahman* is absolutely simple; it has only one indivisible essence (*eka rasa*). Additionally, it must be noted that in terms of the possibility of the experience of pure being, the Advaita Vedānta holds that such statements as "this table exists," amount to saying that pure being is limited by "this table." Existence is not a predicate, but rather, the subject. The empirical objects only have the status of being predicates, whose subject is pure being.

How then does an object come into being? This becomes a problem inasmuch as the representational consciousness, as confronted by the anticipated object, performs an activity and constitutes the object through a relational structure. The idea of consciousness as constituting the object, however, contradicts a realism that believes that the object has a reality which is independent of the act of knowing. In response, one can say, that this question cannot be answered in the context of the Hindu systems of thinking because there is a certain realistic conception of the world underlying most of them. The Buddhists, on the other hand, answered this question by saying that the object is constituted by names and forms, etc., which derive from a

language. For the Hindu philosophers, consciousness is never held responsible for structuring the world as we find it in Kant or Husserl; consciousness simply manifests.

One wonders what is the relation between religious and spiritual experiences in Indian and European religions. The question also arises whether issues of religion and rationality are solely Euro-centric in origin. Indians used reason, their thinking was rational, but they did not thematize the concept of "reason." The *pramāṇa* theory is the theory of reason, if by "reason" is meant the process of justifying one's beliefs. The theory provided what were believed to be good reasons, rejecting those, which were believed to be not good reasons. The logicians thematized the concepts of "good argument," "fallacious arguments," "sound evidence," and the role of language in the process of justification. Philosophical views were subjected to critical examinations including their possible consistency or self-contradiction. Thus, whereas thinking was rational, "reason" itself was not elevated to the status of a metaphysical principle, which one finds at the beginning of the Western thought in the concepts of *Logos* and *Nous*.

IV

A Typology of Experience

1. Activity and Passivity: One of the components of the idea of experience is the idea of passivity. This implies that when I have an experience, or experience something, I do not actively produce it or live through it. I am overtaken by the experience though I did not contrive to do so. However, it may also seem that there are a variety of experiences that do not entirely take me by surprise but are rather anticipated. When I go to an art museum in order to see for the first time a particular work of art, and upon seeing it have an aesthetic experience, I am struck by its beauty, and that

experience without doubt does not only have an element of passivity but also involves activity insofar as I made an effort to visit the museum, I read about this piece, and I was eager to see it and thus, in a way, prepared myself for the experience. However, on my construal, when I stood before that work of art, I had to surrender my self to that piece of art to work on my sensibilities, and this is the element of passivity. Again, if it is true that I must be prepared to receive it, to surrender myself to that work to speak to me, that is an element of activity. Thus, it seems that both passivity and activity blend together in such an aesthetic experience. A good analysis of experience then would require determining the role of each; however, in the absence of what I called "passivity" nothing could count as an experience. Thus, the familiar opposition between experience and thought at a minimum, to use Kantian terminology, lies in believing that thinking involves spontaneity and experience involves receptivity.

One's model of experience, more often than not, is sensory perception, i.e., in taking the sensory data that impinge on one's sense organs, one seems to be passively receptive. One may actively imagine a sensory experience as vividly as one can, but it seems that such imagination could never amount to the "warmth and vivacity" with which the sensory data impinge on the sense organs. Hume's analysis of experience in terms of impressions rests upon this simple fact. Impressions, the ultimate components of experience, argues Hume, are in effect produced by external stimuli, possibly also by internal stimuli, which are more like finger prints than like one's handwriting. The Kantian transformation of this notion consists in recognizing that such impressions do in fact constitute the building blocks of experience but experience also requires conceptual organization of these materials, so that both passivity and activity are involved in experience in this

sense. In the contemporary mode of discourse, the Kantian position may be restated thus: experience not merely receives data or whatever is given, or whatever overtakes me, and takes me by surprise, but also involves interpretation of these data by the mind. The interpretation may be subsequent to an experience, or it may be so thoroughly constitutive of the experience that one does not recognize its presence and functioning, except through a reflective analysis. When this interpretation is subsequent, it supervenes on the prior experience either soon after it occurs or possibly after a lapse of time. I will illustrate the point that I am trying to make by considering what happens in an aesthetic experience discussed in the preceding paragraph. After being hit, as it were, by the unique beauty of a work of art, I may immediately think about what happened to me, or subsequently after a lapse of time return to it in a more reflective and analytic mood and give it a meaning and a place in the scheme of things. If indeed there was an element of experience, not subsequent to the experience, but constitutive of that experience, I did not know of it then. I only think of it reflectively in the following way: "my eyes only saw the patterns of colors on the canvas, but having been trained in looking at the works of art—this training which involves not merely training the eyes but also of the mind—and that it is this training which enabled me to undergo this experience that I had." Thus, one may distinguish between two kinds of interpretations: the original and the subsequent or reflective. The first, when it constitutes an experience, totally effaces itself, remains hidden, and lets receptivity take hold of the person having the experience. The second kind of reflection precisely tries to bring out that interpretation and posits it as having been active even when it functioned anonymously. The irony is that the reflective self-understanding does not completely coincide with the original pre-reflective interpretation.

Hence the oft-repeated advice, "look at the experience exactly as it was lived through and do not try to interpret or explain it away."

The above remarks make us acknowledge that passivity and activity may indeed be so seamlessly fused together that we do not find two elements in an experience, we find only one, i.e., the element of passivity, which makes it an experience. This, however, is not to suggest that the other element viz., activity, is totally absent. While the beauty of a sunset or a blossoming cherry tree may strike even the unschooled and the untrained mind, having an aesthetic experience within the walls of an art museum requires a great deal of schooling of both the eyes and the mind. Similarly, while an untrained rustic villager may have a religious experience, which he does not quite understand, a lot of what passes for spiritual experience may be the result of an enormous amount of effort and preparation. But, in any case, when the experience occurs, it occurs with a force which stills the conceptual thinking and captures one's entire being within its grips. The passivity is the result of activity such that the preparatory function of activity retreats into a self-effacement.

In accordance with these remarks, I would make a typology of experiences by distinguishing between (1) sensory experience, (2) aesthetic experience, (3) moral experience, (4) religious experience, and (5) spiritual experience. In each of these types, there is a delicate but shifting balance between the two factors of receptivity (passivity) and spontaneity (activity), the balance that always enables the active element to be self-effacing so that passivity may prevail. It should be noted that as long as passivity prevails, that is to say, dominates, we call it "experience," but when spontaneity prevails we call it "interpretation." To describe how the balance is maintained so that we may have experiences requires careful phenomenological description.

(1) Let us begin with sensory perception. What approximates a completely passive experience is perhaps when one wakes up from deep sleep and in the first moment of waking there is, in the words of William James, "a buzzing, booming, confusion." This initial moment, however, is replaced by his perceiving familiar objects and persons around him; this experience is now along the lines of conventional interpretations (this is my bedroom, this is my night stand, and so on). Finally, when in the midst of conventional perception of familiar objects, a totally unexpected sound breaks in or a flash of light suddenly intervenes, one is startled and is overtaken by the experience and does not know what to make of it initially, that is to say, how to interpret it. In the course of everyday life, as the familiar perceptions continue, the impressions continue to impinge on the sense organs arousing well-established ways of interpreting them; however, the fact that the mind is continuously engaged in interpretations is silently glossed over or forgotten because of the familiar and conventional character of what we perceive. We do not say we are thinking, we rather say that we are only seeing, hearing, that is to say, experiencing.

(2) An aesthetic experience, as noted above, has a perceptual basis with its own experiential character. Aesthetic experiences are rooted in sensory perceptions, irrespective of whether one sees a beautiful work of art, listens to Ravi Shankar's Sitar, or sees a beautiful landscape. In such experiences, an experiencer is captivated by an aesthetic quality. Though this new experience may involve some schooling of the eye and the mind, yet when it comes about, the preparatory spontaneity is effaced by an overwhelming passivity of experience.

(3) What happens in a moral experience? Let us consider two extreme examples. At the one extreme, one not only comes in contact with a good person, but also sees

him/her doing an exemplary action. In this case, one is not thinking of goodness defined simply in theoretical terms, but experiences it as something that supervenes upon what one sees. It may overwhelm one emotionally exactly as an experience of beauty may, there may be cultural interpretive factors underlying it; however, the experience that one has possesses all the features of aesthetic experience, with the exception that in this case the basic datum is not beauty but goodness. At the other extreme, is the experience of evil when one, much to one's disgust, finds oneself in the midst of a situation where a person robs an infant or an old lady for one's personal gratification. Here when one experiences a powerful negative emotion of hatred and disgust, one still has the same kind of passivity of being overwhelmed by what is experienced.

Regarding (4) and (5), let me now say a few words about the distinction between a religious and spiritual experience using insights from the Hindu religion. In religious experience—in the experience of *bhakti* or loving devotion to one's chosen deity, say, Kṛṣṇa, for example—the experience, unlike previous experiences, is not any more the familiar perceptual experience of things and human actions as overlaid by a supervening quality (of beauty and goodness); it is rather an experience of a personal relationship to the deity as one of love and trust, of which a perceptual image may or may not serve as a substratum. The *bhakta* or the devotee, however, does have a powerful emotional experience, which the theoreticians of *bhakti* have analyzed and classified into many different subtypes.

Even this thin dependence upon outer perception or imagination vanishes in what I call "spiritual experience," more specifically, of the variety found in Advaita Vedānta. To make the nature of this experience clear, I would first focus upon the fact that in classical Advaita Vedānta, it is a well-known doctrine that the final knowledge, or rather

the experience of the identity of the *ātman* and the *brahman*, is the "result" of a three-staged process consisting of *śravaṇa*, *manana*, and *nididhyāsana*. But even before the first stage of *śravaṇa* begins, there is a preparatory stage, which, according to Śaṃkara, consists in the acquisition of certain intellectual and moral excellences. These excellences are: (1) *nityānitya vastu viveka*), (2) *ihāmutrātha bhogavirāga*, (3) *śamadamādi sādhanasampat*, and (4) *mumukṣutva*. To give a quick rendering in the right order; we must (1) develop a clear sense of the distinction between what is eternal and what is non-eternal, (2) give up any desire for enjoyment of the results in this world or in after life, (3) cultivate moral excellences such as external and internal control of the sense organs; and (4) have a strong desire for liberation. Once these excellences are acquired one is qualified to study the Vedānta texts with a *guru* or teacher, which constitutes what is called *śravaṇa*. This is followed by reflective thinking (*manana*) on the Vedānta *mahāvākyas* ("great sayings"), and one establishes to one's satisfaction the truth of the Vedānta thesis and refutes skeptical arguments against it. With this stage, the intellect becomes firmly and unwaveringly settled on the thesis of the non-difference of the *ātman* and the *brahman*, but this thesis now intellectually comprehended and reflectively established, needs to be realized in an immediate experience of that identity through meditation (*nididhyāsana*). This results in destroying ignorance that had concealed the *brahman*. This is the final experience, which is articulated in the Upaniṣadic sentence "I am he."

Irrespective of the questions, which are indeed difficult to answer regarding the precise nature of the final experience, there is no denying that it is construed as the culmination of a process, a preparatory work (or what is called "*sādhanā*"). At this point let me reflect upon on the role that this preparatory work plays in the emergence of this experience. The Advaitins in no uncertain terms deny

that this experience is causally brought about by the preparatory work, because the concept of causality applies to mundane events, and while the preparatory work is within the structure of mundaneity, the experience of the identity of the *ātman* and the *brahman* transcends the mundane so that it cannot be construed as the effect of a cause (which would make it transitory or non-eternal). So, what exactly is the role of this preparatory work? The process of *sādhanā* therefore functions only as a negative process of removing the impediments, which obstruct and conceal the *brahman* from showing itself or from being manifested. Causally construed, it brings about the destruction of ignorance, (*āvaraṇabhaṅga)*. Once that is accomplished, the causal efficacy ceases to be and one experiences *brahman*. There are numerous theoretical questions connected with this reflective interpretation, e.g., how could this experience, self-manifesting in itself, be prevented from manifesting itself? Which ignorance is being destroyed? Is it the ignorance of the person engaged in *sādhanā* or is it the root ignorance (*mūlāvidyā*) responsible for the world appearance? The Advaita theoreticians have tried to answer these and many similar theoretical questions relentlessly. For my purposes, it would suffice simply to draw the attention of my readers to the same pattern of preparatory activity and resulting passivity as we noticed in the types of experience previously discussed. Additionally, if the causal efficacy extends up to the destruction of ignorance, even this locution of "destruction" is not to be taken literally. Ordinarily when one destroys a jar with a stroke of a hammer, the idea of destruction is being used literally. But when what is being destroyed is ignorance, whose being on the Advaita theory is neither *sat* (existent) nor *asat* (non-existent), the talk of destruction sounds very strange indeed, because when the ignorance ends and what was concealed stands manifested (for

example, when the missing necklace is discovered to be on one's neck while one was searching for it all around), the process of search, inquiry, and *sādhanā* acquire the sense of having been for nothing or in vain. It is important to remember in this context that whereas in the preceding four types of experiences, *the preparatory work effaces itself when the experience arises, in the case of spiritual experience the preparatory work does not simply efface itself; it totally negates itself.*

Let me now make some general remarks to bring the discussion of the five types of experience together. In each case, as we saw, activity and passivity blend together, with passivity remaining dominant in the end. In the case of spiritual experience, however, I called into question the role of activity in making experience possible; initially activity seemed to have a negative function (the removal of ignorance), but eventually the negative function seemed not that important, because the experience is neither brought about nor could be made manifest, given that it is self-manifesting; thus, any interpretation to the contrary had to be rejected. Let me suggest that in different degrees the same characterizes the first four types of experience as well. When in a perceptual experience of opening my eyes, or turning my head towards or lending my attention to some sort of the surrounding world, I perceive what is there and the world is manifested to my consciousness, it is not entirely clear how the physical and the attentive processes bring about this experience. In such an experience the obstruction of ignorance is also removed, and the causal efficacy of that process reaches within the limits of mundaneity so that the perceptual consciousness is standing at the point where the mundane and the transcendental meet each other. The transcendental, viz., the consciousness, even perceptual consciousness, is not an effect of the mundane process. It seems to me that the same is true of the aesthetic experience

of beauty, of *rasa,* in the technical language of the Indian aesthetics. The mundane process of active preparation does not generate or produce that consciousness of *rasa* in the causal series, but only serves to manifest what in its transcendentality must have been self-manifesting. The same characterizes the other two types of experience. Everywhere, in all kinds of experiences, mundane and the transcendental come together, but precisely *how* they come together remains a mystery. Our immediate temptation is to make use of the language of causality, but when we realize that causality extends only up to the limits of mundaneity, and that all experience—as consciousness is transcendental and so can only misleadingly appear to be brought about causally—we begin to realize that what was found to be true in the case of spiritual experience is true of all experiences. *Experience,* to recapitulate, *is the point where the mundane and transcendental come together*, as Śaṃkara himself notes that in the very structure of experience, the *satya,* the truth, and the *anṛta,* the untruth, are coupled together. Reflective thinking can only keep them apart, but the line of demarcation perpetually escapes us. If one draws a line between the two, one still has to distinguish one side of the line belonging to the mundane and the other side of the line belonging to the transcendental, but a geometrical line is not supposed to have two sides. We are again in a paradoxical predicament.

The peculiar mixing of the empirical and the transcendental may be made more specific by analyzing the intentional structure of consciousness into two components: the consciousness and the object. The object not being self-manifesting is mundane, belongs to the world, and is manifested by consciousness. The consciousness being self-manifesting in no way depends on the object; it is transcendental. While one can draw such a broad distinction, objectivity extends into what may initially be regarded as belonging to the structure of consciousness,

depending upon to what extent reflection can objectify consciousness or components of it. Thus, what the Advaitins call *"vṛtti"* or the cognitive state, its objective form, the specific types of consciousness such as perceptual and aesthetic, can be reflectively objectivated and as a result are pushed back into the world. Whatever, if any, cannot in principle be objectivated would remain on the other side of the limit. Also, the property of an intentional experience, yours or mine, is also objectivated in introspection and suffers the same fate. You and I thereby become objective entities belonging to the world.

In our search for separating the mundane from the transcendental, it may be useful to place on the one side the intentional consciousness with its ego-act-object structure in the world as mundane and the pure self-shining consciousness as the transcendental on the other. It perhaps is the case that without the pure self-shining consciousness, the intentional structure would not be what it is, but within it the transcendental is so mingled with the empirical that it cannot be separated from the latter. Therefore, one can transfer the whole structure into the domain of the empirical and still look for the pure self-shining consciousness as being constantly there without being objectivated. The original distinction within intentionality, between consciousness and the object, either yields a consciousness which by that very distinction is rendered mundane, or, alternately, if one refuses to make it mundane and focuses on its transcendentality, then the relation between the two, viz., consciousness and the object, becomes wholly unintelligible, because intentionality is not merely a relation between two things, the object and consciousness, but it is also internally constitutive of both. Consciousness intrinsically points to an object, just as the object points to a consciousness, which objectifies it. Thus, the intentional structure in spite of the touch of transcendentality as a whole pulls itself into the ocean of mundaneity. The transcendental at the point

shows itself; it is rendered mundane, yet without the transcendental functioning in the heart of the mundane there perhaps could be a world but no experience of the world.

V

Reason and Experience: Concluding Remarks

I have already noted that in my conception of "reason" in Advaita Vedānta *pratyakṣa* as one of the *pramāṇas* involves reason. To put it differently, on my conception of reason, reason being the system of *pramāṇas* in their interconnection includes perception. The distinction between reason and experience in that case is a distinction within reason, viz., between the whole system and one of the *pramāṇas*. It is important to bring out the implication of this thesis. The familiar kind of experience that identifies experience with bare sensation (as in Hume or in the Buddhist conception of pure perception or *nirvikalpaka* perception) sets up "experience" in *external* opposition to "reason," meaning thereby that experience is what reason is not. On this conception (Buddhist and Humean) experience is a mere reception of what is barely given without any activity of the knowing mind. Given that Advaita Vedānta, on my understanding includes *pratyakṣa* as a *pramāṇa* among other *pramāṇas*, which includes perception, then perception cannot be a mere passive reception of an impression but must involve an active role of the knowing mind. We know that on the Advaita theory of perception the knowing mind actively goes out and achieves an identity with the object. Perception, in other words, is not the result of a causal action of the object upon the mind (which is the Buddhist view), but rather the active going out, which, of course, is mediated by the sense organ involved. It is important to remember in this context that the activity of the mind leading to the

manifestation of the object only shows that even perception involves an activity of the mind; it is not simply a causal product.

In order to make clear the exact nature of the Advaita Vedānta theory of perception, I would contrast it with another theory of perception according to which perception is not simply an experience; it also involves reason. This is the Kantian theory in which perception involves both a passive reception of data and an active conceptualization of it. Without the latter, there would be only sensation, no perception. The Advaita theory does not amount to dividing perception into two components, but rather asserts that perception involves identification of the subject with the object as one cognitive process, thereby removing the Kantian requirement to bring data under concepts. This unitary cognitive process is in one aspect purely sensuous, and accordingly, may be called "empirical," yet in another aspect involves identification with the subject, and may be called "rational." This explains why I prefer to say that perception *as a whole* involves "reason." No *pramāṇa* that involves justifying a belief can be said to be a merely passive reception.

By bringing experience itself under the scope of reason, I call into question the familiar opposition between experience and reason, between empiricism and rationalism. Reason, by its very nature, being attuned to reality, any knowledge of reality, irrespective of kind, is a rational activity. In a certain sense, this notion of reason and its relation to experience comes close to the Hegelian idea that perception is not opposed to reason but rather the beginning of rational thinking. What begins with perception is confirmed by inference, and substantiated by *śabda*. Knowledge by *śabda* involves an interpretation of the meaning, especially in the case of *lakṣaṇās*, where the direct meaning does not work as in the case of understanding the *mahāvākya*s of the Upaniṣads. Further reflection on the

meaning of these great sayings leads to *aparokṣa anubhūti* called "*brahmānubhava.*" Again, in this case, one should resist the immediate temptation to set up an opposition between the *anubhava* as a pure experience and all rational activity of thinking and reflecting. On the other hand, *brahmānubhava* is the culminating achievement of reason, much like the Hegelian knowledge of the absolute. Thus, reason is a developing process that begins with sensory perception, develops through *anumāna* and all other *pramāṇas,* eventually passing through *śravaṇa, manana, and nididhyāsana* to *brahmānubhava* in which thought achieves its fundamental identity with reality.

In including *śruti* as a component of the total structure of reason, I am in effect arguing against an understanding of *śruti* that opposes it to reason, takes it to mean "revelation," or even a higher experience, a supra-rational authority. I believe this understanding, though conventional among English writings on Indian philosophy, is mistaken; it blocks a deeper understanding of the nature of philosophical activity in Indian thought. Those who oppose thought and reality, reason and experience, start with a narrowly defined conception of both. I suggest that Advaita Vedānta does not have these narrowly defined concepts; we rather have an account of the cognitive process which begins with *pratyakṣa* and culminates in *brahmānubhava* and the whole process may be called reason, at both ends of which we can talk of experience, which places experience not in an external opposition to reason, but as something that belongs to reason internally.

In this book, I have attempted to emphasize that Advaita Vedānta is a supremely rational discourse. This rationality is not exhausted by the argumentativeness of Śrī Harṣa, but includes an appeal to and interpretation of the texts of the *śruti.* As reason develops from sensory perception to an understanding of *śruti,* experience also undergoes a parallel transformation. The two "reason" and "experience" are

inseparably intertwined—nay, two aspects of the same cognitive process. Let us not downplay this supremely rational-critical philosophy by talking misleadingly about "revelation" and "supernormal experience." The *apauruṣeyatva* (not having a human author) and *svataḥpramātva* (self-validating nature) of the Vedāntic texts are most painstakingly established, not by faith, but by rational critique.

This harmonizing path is that for which I, as a modern Vedāntin, argue. In exploring the relationship between reason and experience today, I have sought to show the harmony between the two, rather than condoning the postulation of a clear-cut dichotomy between the two that characterizes the Western philosophical discourse. The East and the West have much to learn from each other in this spirit.

Endotes

1. Note that the skeptical question appears again, despite my unwillingness to entertain it whether the two words "experience" and "*Erfahrung*" are synonyms.
2. *The Oxford Universal English Dictionary on Historical Principles*, prepared by William Little, H.W. Fowler, and J. Coulson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955), p. 656.
3. Jonathan Barnes (ed.) *Complete Works of Aristotle* (ed.), Vol. I, *Posterior Analytics* II.19 (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1984), p. 166.
4. I understand "internal contrast" as follows: the opposition with q is internal to p, if and only if p is defined in terms of that opposition. Neither Hume's "impression" nor Leibniz's "idea" is definable in terms of "idea" in the former case or by "sensation" in the latter case.
5. David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, edited by Charles W. Hendel (New York: The Library of Liberal Arts, 1987), p. 27. Henceforth this work will be cited as Hume's *Enquiry*.

6. Ibid.
7. Ibid., p. 27.
8. Ibid., p. 28.
9. Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, translated by Norman Kemp Smith (New York: The Macmillan Press, 1973), B_1.
10. *Ibid.*, A 176=B218 & A 764= B793.
11. Plato's *Republic*, Books VI & VII.
12. Hegel's *Phenomenology*, Chapter I, "Sensuous Certainty."
13. Heidegger, *Holzwege* (Frankfurt:Klosterman, 1950), Chapter 3.
14. Ibid., p. 170.
15. Edmund Husserl, *Ideas:General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*, (tr.) W.R. Boyce Gibson (London: Allen & Unwin, 1931).
16. J. N. Mohanty, *The Philosophy of Edmund Husserl: A Historical Development* (New Haven: Yale university Press, 2007),Ch. 20.
17. *Ideas* I, sec.137.
18. *Ibid.*, sec. 142.
19. Mental mode leading to the manifestation of an object.
20. "Transcendental" in this context signifies that which is not worldly, space and time do not apply to it: it roughly approximates Kant's "transcendent."
21. *Critique of Pure Reason*, Section I, Chapter II.
22. For a discussion of these and other related issues, see Daya Krishna's "Is Nyāya Realist or Idealist?" in *Discussions and Debates in Indian Philosophy*, edited by Daya Krishna (New Delhi: Indian Council of Philosophical Research, 2004), pp. 225–227.
23. See P. F. Strawson's *Individuals: An Essay in Descriptive Metaphysics* (London: Methuen, 1959) and Śaṃkara's "*Adhyāsabhāṣya*" in *BSBh*.
24. "Letter on Humanism," (trans.) Frank A. Capuzzi with J. Glenn Gray in *Basic Writings* (ed.) David F. Krell (New York, Harper & Row, 1993), pp. 193–224.
25. E. Husserl, *Logical Investigations* (trans.) J.N. Findlay (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul), Vol. II, Investigation VI, Sec. 8.)

Part IV

Appendices

Appendix I

Is *Śruti* Revelation?

The Vedas, also called "*śrutis,*" have been often characterized as "revelations." For example, K.S. Murty, an eminent Indian scholar, titles one of his books *Revelation and Reason in Advaita Vedānta,* and argues that a "study of Śaṇkara's *bhāṣyas* shows that according to him there are four ways in which the Brahman reveals itself." He further notes that the Vedic revelation gives us the kind of knowledge "which is not got through perception and inference— that the Veda is promulgated at the beginning of each world-cycle by *Īśvara*. This is the main type of revelation accepted by Śaṇkara and accordingly the greater part of this book will be concerned with the Vedic revelation."[1] Another internationally known Indologist, W. Halbfass, in his book *India and Europe* argues that the "Vedic revelation provides the most original, most immediate documentation of religious experience."[2]

My primary concern in this section is to assess whether the words "*śruti*" and "Veda" can be correctly translated as "revelation." I will begin with a discussion of the following two questions: first, is "revelation" or "revealed texts" a correct translation of "*śruti*"? Secondly, "*śruti,*" even if not translatable as "revealed text," is indeed revealed? If the answer to the first question is in the affirmative, then the sentence "*śruti* is revealed" must be analytic, even

tautological; if the second is answered in the affirmative, then the sentence is true but synthetically, because the predicate adds something new to the concept of the subject. Before proceeding further let us pause briefly to assess what is usually meant by "revelation."

What is Revelation?

Johannes Denninger defines "revelation" as "a divine communication to human beings."[3] The definition is wide enough to allow for various degrees and modes of revelation, however, the definition makes it essential that God must communicate to humans. Definitions of "revelation" vary, contingent upon the source, the author of communication, the means of communication, and the contents communicated. Thus, a revelation may be a communication from God or from some supernatural being. Again, it may be a communication by the medium of the text or by signs or events; the content being communicated may be theoretical or theological or moral and practical.

Most discussions of "revelation" are by Jewish Christian authors, who regard the revelation—on which their respective religions are based—to be of the highest kind, and indeed orient their definitions to entail their sense of revelation. It is important to keep this in mind as we proceed in our investigation. For example, Karl Barth held that Christianity alone possesses a revelation. This is a typical view almost reduced to an analytically true claim.[4]

Let us go back to the root words, Latin "*revelatio*"[5] and Greek "*apokalupsis*."[6] Pacek uses the words "*apokalupsis*" ("uncover," "uncovered") and "*phaneroun*"[7] ("make apparent," "show"). By revelation, God uncovers the divine plan, so that it becomes more than merely announcement of messages. Derivatively, the apostles also "reveal": they announce the good news.

One may distinguish between natural revelation and supernatural revelation. Inasmuch as God's wisdom, goodness, and power are manifested in the world, there is "natural" revelation of Gods' nature in and through experience of the world. But God's communication to humans—as in the Ten Commandments—requires a special supernatural revelation. Besides these, there can be revelations to specific human beings at special moments in the history of God's message—which, of course, cannot be complete.

Paul Tillich holds that the history of a religion passes through three stages: first, there occurs an event of revelation that is a break-through (*Durchbruch*), then a stage of conversion (*Umwendung*), followed by realization (*Realisierung*). The break-through is in the original revelation, which establishes the unique content upon which a religion is founded.[8]

There is on the face of it a contradiction in the entire account. If in the founding of each religion—or, let us even say, every major religion— there is a revelation, i.e., a communication by God to a group of humans, a community, or even to humankind, then, in case the founding contents are not mutually compatible, God will have to be regarded as communicating conflicting contents. In order to remove this inconsistency, one may have to say either that not all religions are equally true, and so not based on genuine revelations; alternately, one would have to say that God revealed what he thought was appropriate to that segment of humankind and not to another.

Before passing on to our question at hand, let me mention another, altogether different, possible understanding of "revelation." According to this understanding, to say that a content "was revealed" is equivalent to saying that that content was experienced by people before us. As one author puts it,[9] the usual theological interpretations of "revelation" leave the

impression that God dictated some text to some one (e.g., to Moses) so that others could learn it from him. The message would consist of words of God. One may ask, in which language? What was God's utterance (*dhvani*-like)? Instead, it is much more intelligible to say that when God reveals a content c, a person receives it, and this, or any, person may be said to receive the content c, when he experiences c in a way other than by reason. *In this sense, revelation is an experience generated in a person—an experience which is then interpreted as telling the story c.*

Thus, to sum up, "revelation" has the following senses:

R_1: God's original, founding, communicating to a part of humankind.

R_2: A divine being's, or a spirit's, or spiritual being's message to serve one person intended to be shared with others.

R_3: God's or a divine being's message symbolized by some sign or symbol (not amounting to a linguistic text).

R_4: A person's experience of God (or of spiritual beings) which can reasonably be interpreted as amounting to a message c (from its author).

Are the Vedas revelations in any of these senses? Of these four, clearly, R_3 is out of question. So only three possibilities remain: R_1, R_2, and R_4. Many Indian, the so-called neo-Hindu, writers of modern times have opted for R_4—a position I will attend to at a later stage in this discussion. For the present, I ask, which one of R_1 and R_2 best fits the Vedic texts? In other words, are the Vedas original, founding, communication of God to the Vedic Aryans (whoever these people may be)—communications with which Hinduism (or, Vedic religion, or *sanātana dharma*) had its break-through in Tillich's sense? Or, are they communications of the "illuminated," spiritual beings, the Vedic *devatās* (such divinities as Indra, Agni, Varuṇa, Mitra and the rest of the Vedic pantheon) to, not someone, but the *ṛṣis*, the spiritual persons?

I will first discuss the second alternative, i.e., R_2, which has a *prima facie* relevance towards understanding the *Ṛg Vedic mantras*. How do we after all decide with regard to a given text, whether it is a revelation by a being, or even by a God? Clearly there are two possible answers. For one thing, we need to let the text speak for itself, testify to its own source, etc. Do the Vedic *mantras* bear within themselves their own testimony that they were messages from the *devatās* or not?[10] I think not. Nowhere does a Vedic *mantra* contain a statement of the form "I, the *devatā* Agni (for example), wish to tell you that . . . ." But everywhere we hear utterances of the form "to you, Agni, the god of the highest abode, we pray that....." Thus, the first kind of search does not confirm the hypothesis that the Vedic *mantras* are revelations of the type R_2. The other way of deciding the question is to ask, how do the believers take the texts to be like? The believers of Islam look upon themselves as receiving messages from God revealed to the Prophet. From a purely internal perspective, then, the *Qu'ran* is God's revelation. Can we say that the Vedic *mantras*—in an unbroken line of continuity— are regarded to be messages received by the *ṛṣis* from the appropriate *devatā*? Again, I would answer this question in the negative. The Vedic believers regard them not as messages from the deities, but as invocations to them, whereby those deities are invited to do various favors to the believers-cum-practitioners. The Vedic hymns then are not revelations in the sense of R_2.

In order to assess whether R_1 model fit the Vedas we need to determine, whether the Vedas may be regarded as communications from God to a section of humankind and thus serving as "break-through" of the Vedic religion, now known as Hinduism? I reject this possibility on at least two grounds: first, nothing in the texts bears testimony to these text's being "communications" from God. The kinds of

sentences which come closest to be such, are those in which the author declares that he has seen the shining one, the truth, etc., but the sentence is not uttered by that true being, God, or *brahman* as what is intended to be made known to humankind.

The *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (*MU*) comes closest to saying that *Brahmā*, the first born among the gods and maker of the universe, taught the *brahma-vidyā* to his eldest son Atharvan.[11] Note that though maker of the universe, *Brahmā* is not Brahman, not even God, but the first born god. He teaches a science, a knowledge—not the Vedas. A little later, *MU* speaks of two kinds of knowledge, *parā*, the higher, and *aparā*, the lower.[12] Again, it states that the lower knowledge consists of *Ṛg Veda*, *Yajur Veda*, *Sāma Veda* and *Atharva Veda*, also phonetics, ritual, grammar, etymology, meter, science of the stars and their motions.[13] The higher knowledge is that by which the unchanging (*akṣaram*) is known. Note the place of the Vedas in the system of knowledge. "Veda" means "knowledge." The Vedas are *vidyās*, sciences, knowledges, not revelations.

The highest Being, the One, did not communicate the Vedas. The Vedas were *taught*. The science that was taught was taught first by *Brahmā*, the first-born deity to his son. Thus, we do not have the one Being, uttering the Vedas. The *ṛṣis* taught one another, as Aṅgiras taught Śaunaka.

The second ground for rejecting the talk of "revelation" is that the believers and practitioners could not have so regarded the Vedic *mantras*. They regarded the Vedas as beginningless, what is beginningless could not have been "received" at a certain point of time from God. So at least it is not the Hindu belief about the Vedas. The eternity of the Vedas has been asserted in various Vedic texts. The Vedas also assert that creation of the world follows *śabda*. Śaṃkara in his commentary on *Brahmasūtra* 1/3/28 reiterates the same point. Since the Vedas are not composed by human

beings, they are free from all those blemishes which vitiate human compositions. The Mīmāṃsakas believe that the Vedas are not authored or composed by anyone, and being of the nature of *śabda*, they are eternal. They establish the eternity of the Vedas by using their theory of *sphoṭa*, i.e., the theory that words, or rather word-types—as distinguished from word-tokens—are eternal entities. Since every sound on the theory of *sphoṭa* is eternal, and the meaning of *śabda* is not a perishable particular but rather a universal property like *gotva*, which is eternal, therefore, the Vedas are eternal. Tokens are produced and perish, but not the types. The same applies to sentence-types as well, and by the same argument may be extended to an entire text. But it may seem, the argument proves too much, it proves as a matter of fact the eternity of all texts, and not merely of the *śruti*.

Going as far back as *Ṛg Veda*, we note that all existing things are derived from the *Puruṣa* ("Man" or "Person"), the first principle, by a rather crude process of evolution.[14] *Puruṣa* is regarded as both the material and the efficient cause of the world. It is more than an empirical person; it also transcends it. It is represented as a cosmic totality as well as an androgynous being. In the cosmic sacrifice, the *puruṣa* becomes the oblation and from the members of the *puruṣa* originate all things including the four Vedas. In this *sūtra* the origin of the Vedas is stated, however, this position is stated more clearly in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (*BU*).[15] The Vedas are said to originate from the Being. Vedas originate from God without any special effort being made on his part for this purpose. They originate as spontaneously from the One as the breath of a man that comes effortlessly. Śaṃkara in his *BSBh* cites this *BU* passage.[16] Vācaspati in his *Bhāmatī* explains it thus: The *śruti* says that the authorship of the Vedas is effortless. This shows that even according to Śaṃkara, the Vedas are authored by the eternal

omniscient God. Nevertheless, the Vedas are *apauruṣeya*. Why? Because even if the highest *puruṣa* is all powerful, in the composition of the Vedas he did not exercise any independence or autonomy. Vācaspati further notes that the God did not compose the Vedas independently (*na svatantra*).[17] However, how does the Veda originate from God? From *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* we learn that God first created *brahmā* and then taught him all the Vedas.[18] We learn the same from the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*. Thus, began the uninterrupted tradition of the Vedic scholarship.

With the above interpretations in mind, let me return to R_4. To those who hold that the *śrutis* are revelations, they are also records of spiritual experiences of the "Vedic seers."[19] This can be held only using "revelation" in the last of the senses listed above i.e., in the sense R_4. A text is a revelation in this sense if it records the spiritual experiences of a human, or, what may amount to the same, a person's immediate experience of God. I think a text would be revelation in the sense of R_4 more appropriately if it records not merely the author's spiritual experiences, but if he is expressing a message received from God for communication to humankind. Clearly, in this sense, the Vedas are not revelations. Nor do they express the spiritual experiences of their author whoever the person may be.

There are two arguments that may be advanced against the view that the Vedas are records of the spiritual experiences of their authors, the "seers." In the first place—and this is a general argument—a sentence does not express the experience of its utterer or writer. It rather expresses its *meaning* which is intersubjectively available. The utterance may be *occasioned* by an experience, but it does not express that experience. Secondly, the experience, putatively expressed in the Vedic texts, must be capable of being shared, re-experienced by subsequent generations. To regard an experience to be so shareable and re-produced is to introduce an unusual sense of "experience." When we

say that one person's experience—perceptual, intellectual or religious—is shared by others, what we have in mind is not the experience qua experience, but the meaning of the experience (what Husserl so aptly called the *"noema")*. The Vedic texts are understood, interpreted, and re-interpreted using the rules of grammar and interpretation, context (beginning and end) etc., and such rules apply to the meaning or the objective correlate of the experience, which qua experience, is incurably personal and subjective. I wish to advance a third argument why the Vedic texts are not records of experiences. Not all Vedic texts can be construed, even by drastic reconstructions, as records of the experiences of their authors. Many have clearly different linguistic forms. It is more appropriate to say that some of the texts of the Upaniṣads may be construed as conceptualizations of spiritual experiences.

Although contemporary Indian authors speak of the "experiences" of the Vedic "seers," this account is hardly compatible with the thesis of the *apauruṣeyatva*. The Vedas are not, we are told, composed by any humans, so they are authorless. We have to save this traditional self-understanding.

Wilhelm Halbfass advances an interesting argument, drawing upon Vācaspati's commentary on *Śāṃkarabhāṣya*, for the thesis that the Vedas cannot be regarded as records of personal experiences (of the Vedic seers).[20] The argument makes use of the temporality of the human experience, and argues that the alleged eternity of the Vedas is incompatible with it. If the Vedic seers had such and such experience, that must have been at a certain point of time. The Vedic texts however are supposed to be timeless. The only way the thesis can be made consistent is, as argued before, by separating the experience as an act, event, or occurrence and experience as *noema*, but this distinction was not yet available.

Neither Halbfass nor I wish to deny that the Vedic "seers," or for that matter, such saints as Śrī Rāmakṛishṇa and Śrī Ramaṇa, or even Śaṃkara, had their personal experiences which we can call "*brahmānubhava.*" What I am contesting is the thesis that the texts called "*śrutis*" are records of, or expressions of, such experiences. Neither their form nor their content shows them to be so. In fact, a sentence uttered on the occasion of an experience of the utterer, does not express that experience but rather a meaning, a thought.[21] How such thought is related to the experience is quite another question. Thus, to regard the texts as "revelations" in any of the senses R_1- R_4 comes up with the deep problems that surround the above "issues."

But with the foregoing critique, one may think that what is totally rejected is R_4, however, R_1 is still possible. In other words, it is quite possible that God or the gods communicated the texts (not their experiences) to some select few, namely, to the Vedic "seers." But my earlier critique based on the supposed eternity of the Vedas has shown that R_1 is not applicable.

Language either consists of gestures and signs, or it consists of words. The former kind of language is natural to animals. Humans alone use the second kind of language, but they learn it from some one who himself must have learnt it from others. So ultimately there must be some one who did not learn language from some source, but always knew it. Such a person must be omniscient. The Vedas, being the most ancient linguistic texts available, must have their origin in some being who is omniscient. The Vedas are beginningless but learnt by humans.

The alleged *apauruṣeyatva* and "sacredness" of the *śruti* have to be understood in some way other than using the idea of "revelation" imported from Judeo-Christian-Islamic theologies. "Sacredness" has no Sanskrit equivalent which is ascribed by the tradition to the Vedas. Its only synonym

could be *"pavitratā"*; as far as I know, I am not aware of any place where the Vedas have been called *"pavitra."* They are without faults which attach to works authored by humans. Their alleged eternity and being the source of all our knowledge of *dharma*, as well as of Vedāntic knowledge give them the status they enjoy in the Hindu religious tradition. To construe *"śruti"* as what was heard in a revelatory experience is a gross over-statement. There are texts which were preserved upon "hearing" and the process of "hearing" has been going on supposedly without having a first beginning.

Endnotes

1. K.S. Murty, *"Revelation and Reason in Advaita Vedānta"* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969), p. 7.
2. W. Halbfass, *India and Europe* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1988), p. 382. Hereafter this work will be cited as *India and Europe.*
3. Mircea Eliade, *Encyclopaedia of Religion* (New York: Macmillan, 1987), vol. 12, p. 356.
4. Ibid.
5. *"Revelatio"* derives from the past participle of a classical Latin verb (*revelare*) that means "uncover" or "lay bare." *"Revelatio"* essentially just means a "revelation."
6. "*Apokalupsis*" is a Greek noun that can mean "a manifestation" or an "uncovering" or "a revelation." The *New Testament* uses it in the meaning of "a revelation."
7. "*Phaneroun*" is a Greek infinitive meaning "to make manifest" or "to reveal." When used with the word "to" (the definite article in the neuter singular), then it could be either an infinitive or a neuter participle used as a noun and meaning "manifestation" or "revelation."
8. Ibid., p. 531.
9. See "It was revealed? What does it mean?" http.www.mbay.net/-jmejia/book054.htm

10. Let it be noted here that the Vedic term "*deva*" or "*devatā*" does not mean a god but rather "the shining one," an illuminated being, a spiritual power (by implication), a personified force or power, or—as in some cases —personified virtue, wisdom, knowledge, faith, etc., as the case may be. The *mantras* praise such entities; they do not convey messages from them to humans. *The ṛsis utter the mantras addressed to devas, the devas do not utter them for the ṛsis.*
11. *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* 1.1.1.
12. Ibid., I.1.4.
13. Ibid., I.1.5.
14. *RV*, X.90
15. *BU*, 2.4.10.
16. See *BSBh* 1.1.3. Śaṃkara refers to BU 2.4.10 in this aphorism.
17 Vācaspati on 1.1.3 "*sarvajño'pi sarvaśaktirapi pūrvasargānusāreṇavedān viracayan na svatantraḥ.*"
18. *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*, 6.18.
19. See, for example, S. Radhakrishnan's *The Hindu View of Life* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1964), and *The Principal Upaniṣads* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1990). Also see, *India and Europe*, Chapter 21.
20. See *India and Europe*, p. 392.
21. This argument has been made by J.N. Mohanty in several of his writings. For example, see his *Reason and Tradition: An essay on the nature of Indian Philosophical Thinking* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), pp. 257–59.

Appendix II

Is *Anubhava* a *Pramāṇa*?

A Note on the Anantanand Rambachan and Arvind Sharma Controversy

I

Śruti vs. *Anubhava*

The above-mentioned controversy centers around the question whether according to Śaṃkara *śruti* is the only source of the final knowledge of the *brahman* (which would bring about *mokṣa*), or whether the final emancipatory knowledge is to be brought about by experience (or, what Śaṃkara calls *"anubhava"*). Note that the controversy concerns a precise determination of Śaṃkara's view, and not the final tenability of his position.

Śaṃkara repeatedly declares that such *śrutis* as *Ṛg Veda*, etc., are the only means of knowing the *brahman*[1]; that the *brahman* cannot be known except by means of the Vedāntic *śrutis*"[2]; that the *brahman* as the self cannot be known except by means of the *śrutis*,[3] and so on, thereby subscribing to the position that the *śrutis* are the only means of knowing the *brahman*.[4] He, however, seems to oppose these statements when he asserts that the knowledge of the *brahman* culminates in experience (*anubhava*),[5] and that

this experience is the highest goal of human beings.[6] Basing their interpretations on these seemingly conflicting statements, scholars find themselves in a controversy regarding whether *śruti* or *anubhava* is the final means of knowing the *brahman*.

The weight of the entire discussion, of Sharma's criticisms as well as Rambachan's replies, falls on the relation between *śruti* and *anubhava*. So, my exposition, in this section, will primarily focus on this issue.

Rambachan[7] cites several modern commentators on Śaṃkara, e.g., Radhakrishnan, Devaraja, and Ninian Smart, who argue that according to Śaṃkara, it is not *śruti* but *anubhava* which is "the ultimately valid source of the knowledge of *brahman* (*brahmajñāna*)."[8] For these writers, direct experience alone confirms *śruti*. In other words, these scholars accord to *anubhava* primacy over *śruti*. As against this widely held view, Rambachan defends the thesis that according to Śaṃkara *śruti* is the *sole* valid source of the knowledge of the *brahman*. It is not only the "logical" source of the knowledge of the *brahman*, but also an adequate and "fruitful" (i.e., leading to *mokṣa*) source. While accepting the thesis that *śruti* is the primary *pramāṇa* for Śaṃkara, Sharma questions if it is the *sole* authority as Rambachan seems to hold. In Sharma's words: although Rambachan "clearly establishes the primary authority of *śruti* as a *pramāṇa* for Śaṃkara quite successfully; the claim that it represents the *sole* authority in this respect poses some problems."[9] It poses problems because in 1.1.2, Śaṃkara explicitly refers to *anubhava* as a *pramāṇa*.[10] This crucial passage, notes Sharma, calls "into question the claim, that according to Śaṃkara, *anubhava* cannot be a *pramāṇa*."[11]

I quote below the passage around which the controversy primarily revolves. This important passage, as quoted by Sharma, runs as follows:

> Scriptural texts, &c [*śrutyādayaḥ, śruti,* etc.] , are not, in the enquiry into Brahman, the only means of knowledge, as they are in the inquiry into active duty (i.e., in the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā) but scriptural texts on the one hand and intuition, &c, [*anubhavādayaśca,* experience, etc.] on the other hand, are to be had recourse to according to the occasion; firstly, because intuition is the final result of the enquiry into Brahman,; secondly, because the object of the enquiry is an existing (accomplished) substance. If the object of the knowledge of the *brahman* were something to be accomplished, there would be no reference to intuition, and text, &c, would be the only means of knowledge.[12]

Sharma reads Śaṃkara to be saying that *anubhava* is the *final result* of the other *pramāṇas* and that Śaṃkara uses the terms "*pramāṇa*" and "*anubhava*" in different senses. For example, Śaṃkara uses *pramāṇa* "either to mean 'the means of valid knowledge' or 'the valid means of knowledge.'"[13] The expression "valid knowledge" in the former sense signifies "empirical knowledge characterized by the distinction between the subject and the object," and "knowledge" in the latter sense signifies "the whole range of knowledge, empirical and transcendental. . . ."[14] Thus, "in the case of *śruti* by itself, one 'knows' about Brahman, because one cites the scriptures; in the case of *anubhava,* one cites the scriptures, because one knows."[15] So, Sharma concludes that *anubhava* is a *pramāṇa,* and like *śruti,* is a means of valid knowledge for *brahman*-realization.

Both Sharma and Rambachan seem to agree that Śaṃkara, in his commentary on 1.1.2, states that *anubhava* is a *pramāṇa*. Rambachan argues that Śaṃkara after *anubhava* (experience) adds "etc.," which "suggests that no special significance is being attached to *anubhava*."[16] In this sentence

Śaṃkara uses *anubhava* in a wide sense "to include any experience which can be analyzed to support and reinforce Vedic revelations of *śruti*".[17] He further points out that his commentary on 1.1.2 must be read along with the commentary on 1.1.3, where Śaṃkara clearly states that *śruti* is the only *pramāṇa* of the *brahman*.[18] Rambachan ascribes to Śaṃkara the view that *anubhava* only plays a supplementary role for all *pramāṇas*. The two also differ on the question, whether even everyday experience can support *śruti*.

II

Before stating my reading of the crucial passage quoted above, I would make some general remarks:

Both Rambachan and Sharma fail to take into account the sense of "*anubhava*" which is relevant in the context of the theory of *pramāṇa*. As stated earlier in this work, there is a long tradition, going back to *Nyāyasūtra*, according to which any *pramājñāna*, even inferential and *śabda*, is an *anubhava; pramā* is a *yathārthānubhava*. Given this use, even an ordinary true perception of an object is an *anubhava*, as also a valid inference of the presence of unperceived fire on a hill, or a valid knowledge caused by words alone. If this is so, then when Śaṃkara asserts that all *pramānas* culminate in *anubhava*, Śaṃkara does not mean that *anubhava* itself is a *pramāṇa*, but rather since *pramāṇas* bring about *pramā*, and since every *pramā* is an *anubhava*, all *pramāṇas* terminate in an *anubhava*. In the case of *śruti*, it leads to a perceptual (i.e., immediate) knowledge of the identity of the *ātman* and the *brahman*, known as *śabdajanyāparokṣajñāna* mediated by *manana* and *nididhyāsana*.

Anubhava then need not be a *pramāṇa* subservient to *śruti* (in the case of the *brahman*), as Rambachan takes it to be, nor need it be an additional *pramāṇa* other than the six

the Advaitins admit, as Sharma takes it to be, It is rather nothing other than a *pramājñāna* which is what a *pramāṇa* brings about, especially in the case of an object which is already there (and not to be brought about).

The underlying assumption—of ascribing to Śaṃkara the view that *anubhava* is an additional *pramāṇa*—is that Śaṃkara himself was a *yogin,* who conceived of *yogic* experience as a *pramāṇa.* Whatever may be the merits of that thesis, Śaṃkara was a philosopher and his statements in the commentary have to be understood in that light. Here I think Rambachan is on the right track to the extent he is closer to the Advaita thesis.

With this in mind, let me turn my attention to three issues pertinent in this context:

(i) the sense in which *śruti* is a *pramāṇa* of the *brahman,*

(ii) the meanings of *"pramāṇādayaḥ"* and *"anubhavādayaḥ"* and

(iii) the role of *manana* and *nididhyāsana.* Then, I will return to the central issue: is *brahman* experienced?

Let me begin with *śruti* as a *pramāṇa.* Both Rambachan and Sharma take for granted a thesis, dogmatically accepted by Western Indologists, that *śruti* is based upon, articulates, embodies "revelation." I have repeatedly pointed out the problems with this understanding earlier, especially in Appendix One. The *apauruṣeyatva* of *śruti* means that the meanings of these texts are not dependent upon experiences of their authors, human or divine. The meanings are independent of the intentions of their authors. The *experiences* of those to whom the revelations were made are irrelevant to the meanings of such texts as *"tat tvam asi,"* which has its meaning independently of what the author intended. The question, of course, remains, who revealed those truths, and to whom? In short, I believe that the translation (if it is a translation) and/or this interpretation

(as it certainly is) of "*śruti*" as "revelation" is mistaken. "*Śruti*" is "heard text"; it functions as a *pramāṇa* known as *śabdapramāṇa*. The word, as well as the concept of "revelation" has a different historical origin than the Vedas.

Śabdapramāṇa, of which *śruti* (as a *pramāṇa*) is the species *par excellence*, requires by definition, grasping the meanings of the sentences. Since for Indian philosophers, meanings are things being referred to, not "senses" of a Fregean sort, grasping the meanings is not to be construed as *understanding* in the Western philosophical sense. *Śābdabodha* is not understanding what sentences mean, taking "meaning" in the Western sense, it is rather grasping—as a *pramā*, knowing—the truth (i.e., the object being referred to). If *śruti* is a *pramāṇa* with regard to the *brahman*, knowing the meaning of the texts is the same as knowing the truths those texts are about.

Consider the sentence, quoted by Rambachan, from Radhakrishnan's writings: "Those who have had no direct insight into reality are obliged to take on trust the Vedic views which record the highest experiences of some of the greatest minds who have wrestled with this problem of apprehending reality".[19] Note that Radhakrishnan regards "the Vedic views" as recording "the highest experiences." The argument assumes that Vedic knowledge is merely "abstract" understanding. Only "experience" can yield direct insight. This mode of argumentation presupposes the Kantian distinction between "understanding" and "intuition" as embodied in the Kantian proposition that understanding without intuition is empty. The provisional understanding derived from the Vedic knowledge needs to be supplemented and verified by the concrete experiences of self-knowledge. This mode of speaking is not rooted in the Indian *pramāṇa* theory. There is no English equivalent of *śābdabodha* which is not mere understanding, but knowing the thing being referred to. It is knowledge, as concrete as it can be, of the case under consideration.

Once one grasps the deeper meaning of *śruti* as a *pramāṇa*, then one would realize that *manana* and *nididhyāsana* are components of *śravaṇa*. *Śravaṇa*, however, being of the nature of the determination of *śakti* and *tātparya* of words, is a *pramāṇa*, and so deserves to be the principal factor, the *aṅgi* (the whole), whose *aṅgas* (the parts), are *manana* and *nididhyāsana*. These two serve to remove powerful hindrances, such as the sense of the impossibility of the object, and the thought of the opposite of what is real. The former is removed by *manana*, the latter by *nididhyāsana*. Thus, Rambachan's thesis that, according to Śaṃkara, the only means of knowing the *brahman* is *śruti*, and *anubhava* (experience) is of subsidiary importance, does seem to follow the Vivaraṇa school's thesis that *śravaṇa* is the chief means of knowing the *brahman* and the other two, *manana* and *nididhyāsana*, are auxiliary to it.[20] *Śravaṇa* then would mean not simply hearing the texts, but also grasping their true meaning, which is the same as knowing the truths they state.[21] This knowing, resulting from *śabdapramāṇa*, is an immediate experience, or *anubhava*, which, in Vedānta, is called, "*śabdajanyāparokṣajñāna*." No separate *pramāṇa* called "*anubhava*" is needed.

Additionally, it is worth noting that mere so-called mystical experience cannot bring about the knowledge "I am *brahman*." The experience has to fulfill the intention of the *mahāvākya* "*tat tvam asi*." [In another religious-spiritual tradition, a similar experience would have been articulated differently, e.g. not as "I am God," but as "I am enveloped by the Divine Light!"]. The "*śrutis* make available sentences and words which help the "mystic" to interpret his "experience" in such a manner that he can say "*so'ham*."

How to construe the text, then, in which one supposedly finds statement of the view that *anubhava* itself is a *pramāṇa*? Does Śaṃkara's commentary on BS 1.1.2 allow this construal? Rambachan denies it, while Sharma affirms it.

To resolve this controversy, in the final section of this appendix, I will give my own interpretation of pertinent passages from the *BSBh*. My reflections on the issues are derived from Śaṃkara's texts and some major commentaries on them.

III

Anubhava is not a *Pramāṇa*

In this section I will begin by first reviewing certain basic Indian concepts that one finds in Indian epistemology. The concepts I have in mind are: "*pramāṇa*," "*pramā*," and "*prāmāṇya*." It is well known that these concepts were handed down by the philosophical tradition before Śaṃkara. Śaṃkara took them over from that tradition, and did not see any need for re-defining them. According to that tradition, best formulated by the Naiyāyikas, "*pramāṇa*" means both "source of knowledge" (in the instrumental sense of *pramīyate anena*) as well as "justificicatory ground." It is both the cause and the justification of a knowledge. *Pramā* means true cognition; "*prāmāṇya*" means truth or validity of a cognition.

Besides these terms, there was an ongoing controversy among major schools regarding the question whether *prāmāṇya* is intrinsic (*svataḥ*) or extrinsic (*parataḥ*) to a knowledge? This controversy assumed two forms: is a cognition intrinsic or extrinsic with regard to its knowledge (*jñapti*) or is it intrinsic or extrinsic with regard to its origin (*utpatti*).[22] A cognition C is extrinsically or intrinsically true with regard to *jñapti*, if the knowledge of C *eo ipso* is not (or if it *eo ipso* is) also knowledge that C is true. Likewise, C is intrinsically true with regard to *utpatti* if the conditions which give rise to C also make it true. If they do not, then its truth is extrinsic with regard to its *utpatti*.

The Naiyāyikas held that the truth as well as the falsity of a cognition is extrinsic (*parataḥ*), both with regard to *utpatti* (origination) and with regard to *jñapti* (knowledge). In other words, according to the Naiyāyikas, when a cognition C arises, it is not *eo ipso* either true or false, nor it is *eo ipso* known to be so. This complex theory is known as the theory of *parataḥprāmāṇya.*

The opposite theory is that of the Advaitin, who argues—along with Mīmāṃsā —that the very same conditions which give rise to a cognition C also make it true, and a knowledge of C is also *eo ipso* the knowledge that C is true. Truth or Validity, then, on the Advaita account, is intrinsic to every cognition with regard to both origin and knowledge. But falsity, on the other hand, on the Advaita theory, is extrinsic to a cognition. A cognition becomes false and is known to be so, depending upon the further course of experience which negates C. Combined together, the theory amounts to the theory that *prāmāṇya* is *svataḥ* but *aprāmāṇya* is *parataḥ.*

Given this complex theory, there can be *no* distinction[23] between "the valid means of knowledge" and "the means of valid knowledge." The two sets of conditions would collapse. There is just *no* "false knowledge." Knowledge is intrinsically valid, validity (in empirical discourse) being defined as "not established to be false." Validity, in the context of the knowledge of the *brahman*, is "not a possible object of negation."

Before proceeding further, let me quickly add a note about the equivocation of the word "*prāmāṇya.*" "*Prāmāṇya*" may mean either "*pramākaraṇatva,*" i.e., the property of being the cause of valid cognition, or "*pramātva,*" i.e., the property of being a valid knowledge. It is in the second sense that "*prāmāṇya*" means truth or validity. In the former sense, *prāmāṇya* belongs to every *pramāṇa.*

Again, the crucial word "*anubhava*," means "experience." In Advaita Vedānta, it also means "immediate experience." At times, when used in the sense of immediate experience, the term "*aparokṣānubhava*" is used. Otherwise we have to gather from the context what is meant by "*anubhava*" in a specific context. We know that the Naiyāyikas take any *pramā* or valid knowledge to be an *anubhava*. The Advaitins also use it in this sense. Every *pramāṇa* then, in so far as it gives rise to a knowledge, produces an *anubhava*. For the Advaitins, every object being nothing other than "consciousness as limited by (that) object," what is perceived is that limited consciousness, hence *perceptuality belongs to consciousness*, and perception, even empirical perception, is an *anubhava* in a special sense.

Let us keep in mind that *pramāṇa* also needs a *pramātā* or a subject and *pramā* is true cognition and its object is *viṣaya*. One cannot have a *pramāṇa* that has not given rise to a *pramā*.

We can now deduce the thesis T_1: If *anubhava* were a *pramāṇa*, then it must give rise to a *pramā*. What is the *pramā* of *anubhava*? If it is another *anubhava*, what is that?

With T_1 in mind we can now proceed to make sense of Śaṃkara's many statements.

(1) Consider the phrase, "*anubhavāvasānatvāt*,"[24] i.e., all *pramāṇas* culminate in *anubhava*. This last mentioned *anubhava* then is not itself a *pramāṇa*, for were it so then the subject term "all *pramāṇas*" would already include it. The expression "all *pramāṇas*" may be read either distributively or collectively. In the former sense, each *pramāṇa* culminates in *anubhava*, in the later sense, all cognitive attempts of humans ultimately aim at experiencing (the self as the *brahman*.) In neither sense, *anubhava* is regarded as a *pramāṇa*, but rather as a *pramā*.

(2) Let us now consider the expression, in the same *bhāṣya* on 1.1.4: *"śrutyādayo'nubhavādayaśca yathāsambhavam iha pramāṇam."* The *Bhāmatī* interprets these words in the following way. By *"śrutyādayo,"* is meant the *"śruti, itihāsa, purāṇa,* and *smṛti."* Although all these, *śruti, itihāsa, purāṇa,* and *smṛti,* are *pramāṇas* insofar as they come under *śabda pramāṇa,* there is admittedly a hierarchy of strength among them. By *"anubhavādayaḥ," Bhāmatī* understands *"anubhavaḥ antaḥkaraṇavṛttibhedo brahmasākṣātkāraḥ tasyāvidyānivṛttidvāreṇa brahmasvarūpāvirbhāvaḥ pramāṇaphalam."* This means *"anubhava* is a particular modification of the inner sense and is the direct experience of the *brahman.* By way of removing ignorance, the manifestation of the *brahman*-nature is the fruit of *pramāṇa* or *pramā."* Taken together, the two parts conjointly mean: *"śruti,* etc., are the *pramāṇa. Anubhava* is the fruit of *pramāṇa." Anubhava* leads to the removal of ignorance, being an *antaḥkaraṇavṛtti,* after that, *there is no* more any *experience of.* The eternally self-shining *brahman* stands manifested. The final experience is *śabdajanyāparokṣajñāna.* With the removal of ignorance, nothing new happens. *Brahman* shines, as ever, by its own light. *Anubhava* then is the final *pramā* which destroys ignorance—not a *pramāṇa.*

To take *anubhava* itself as a *pramāṇa* is not only unnecessary, it is also absurd, because then one has no answer the question, what is its resulting *pramā*? It could not be *brahman's* manifestation, because *brahman* is eternally self-manifesting. In according the status of *pramāṇa* to *anubhava,* one fails to take note of the voice of uninterrupted tradition because of the zeal to install personal experience

as the final arbiter in the matter of highest importance—a view which, it could be argued, derives from the Western empiricist's verification theory of meaning and truth.

To sum up: There is *no* indication that Śaṃkara ever held the view that there is a supreme *pramāṇa* or means of knowing called *"anubhava." Brahmānubhava* or experience of the *brahman* is not according to Śaṃkara another *pramāṇa*, besides the six the Advaitins accept. On the contrary, *brahmānubhava* in the strictest sense is not a *pramāṇa* at all; it is beyond the distinction of *pramāṇa* and *prameya*.

Endnotes

1. *BSBh*, 1.1.3.
2. Ibid., 1.1.4.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid., 1.1.2.
6. Ibid., 1.1.1.
7. Anantanand Rambachan's, "Śaṃkara's rationale for *śruti* as the definitive source of *brahmajñāna*: A refutation of some contemporary views," in *Philosophy East and West*, 1996, pp. 25–38. Henceforth this article will be cited as "Śaṃkara's rationale for *śruti* as the definitive source of *brahmajñāna*."
8. Ibid., p. 25.
9. Arvind Sharma's review of Anantanand Rambachan's book *Accomplishing the Accomplished: The Veda as a Source of Knowledge*, Society for Asian and Comparative Philosophy Monograph No. 10 (Honolulu, Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press, 1991), in *Philosophy East and West*, 1993, p. 738ff. Hereafter this book will be cited as *Accomplishing the Accomplished.*
10. *Philosophy East and West*, 1993, p. 741.
11. Ibid., p. 740.
12. Quoted in Arvind Sharma's review of *Accomplishing the Accomplished:* in *Philosophy East and West*, 1993, p. 740.

13. Arvind Sharma, "Is *Anubhava* a *Pramāṇa According to Śanḷkara?" Philosophy East and West,* Vol. 42, 1992, p. 517. Henceforth this article will be cited as "*Anubhava* as a *Pramāṇa.*"
14. Ibid., p. 522.
15. Ibid.
16. *Accomplishing the Accomplished,* p. 114.
17. Ibid., pp. 114–115.
18. Ibid., p. 115.
19. Quoted in Rambachan's, "Śaṃkara's rationale for *śruti* as the definitive source of *brahmajñāna,*" p. 25.
20. Some other Advaitins argue that although *śabda* gives rise to the immediate knowledge of the *brahman,* yet this knowledge does not remain settled and unchanging, *manana* and *nididhyāsana* are needed to remove all doubts, counteracting influences, and bring about an unwavering and fixed knowledge of the *brahman.* That is why it is held that *śabda*-knowledge must be supplemented by analytic reflection and contemplation giving rise finally to the *brahman*-knowledge. Thus, the knowledge of the *brahman* does not arise from *śabda* alone. The Vivaraṇa school rejects this account. "*Nididhyāsana*" cannot be the cause of *anubhava;* there is no *pramāṇa* called "*nididhyāsana*" (*na hi nididhyāsanaṃ nāma kiñcit pramāṇaṃ yena anubhavajanane svayaṃ kāraṇaṃsyāt*)."
21. In this regard, my view is closer to Rambachan's, but more importantly, to the Vivaraṇa position.
22. For a discussion of these concepts and related issues, see J. N. Mohanty's *Gaṇgeśa's Theory of Truth* (Santiniketan: Center of Advanced Study in Philosophy, 1966).
23. As drawn by Sharma in his article "*Anubhava* as a *Pramāṇa.*"
24. *BSBh,* 1.1.2.

Appendix III

What is Intuition?

The word "intuition" is used in a variety of senses, some of which lie outside the strictly philosophical discourse. To this group belong such usages as poetic intuition, mystic intuition, mathematical intuition, scientific intuition, and possibly, a woman's intuition. Although philosophers do not dismiss all of these with equal certitude, there is no reason why some of these cannot be of philosophical interest. In general, they stand for special insights that cannot be arrived at through logical steps and for which there cannot be an unfailing recipe. Nevertheless, one should expect that they must be of some relevance to philosophical discussions about poetry or science of mathematics, or everyday life, as the case may be. One does not understand fully the nature of artistic creativity unless one has some understanding of how the poet or the artist succeeds in producing what she does. The fact that the mechanism of this production cannot be fully analyzed justifies the talk of special intuition that the poet or the artist has at her disposal. Similarly, scientists and mathematicians have often confessed that the problems that they could not solve with their best intellectual efforts, they could solve by a flash of insight which could not be accounted for in terms of any methodological principles. So, it would seem that the talk of intuition must be of some importance in theories of artistic

creativity and scientific discovery. It is, however, extremely difficult to give an account—even if that is a descriptive explanation rather than a causal—of how intuition in these fields arises or comes into play. If philosophers dismiss these as uninteresting, that is only at the cost of being unable to advance a good theory of creativity.

A tentative account of creative intuition could be given without introducing a completely obfuscating and useless appeal to higher sources of inspiration. Such an account may be in terms of Gestalt psychology. Intuition suddenly comes into play when different elements of a situation exhibit completely new patterns of wholeness within which they find meaningful places. Much of scientific creativity consists in suddenly discovering such a structure prior to which it seems one could not make any progress. A good example of this is the discovery of the DNA structure. How such a Gestalt appears for the scientist is described as an intuition only because the process of its production is almost unanalyzable. The same process of recombining familiar elements into a new pattern has also played a role in major mathematical discoveries. One could even argue that the same characterizes new artistic creations. Intuition then would stand for a special ability, non-logical in nature, for seeing a new pattern or Gestalt within which familiar elements find new significance. But how does one come to see such a Gestalt? Those who are impressed by an appeal to intuition marvel at the fact that one does not arrive at such patterns or Gestalts as a result of the method of trial and error but rather almost unaccountably and surprisingly, all of a sudden.

Studies and familiar experiments in animal intelligence show that perceptions of such a Gestalt is not an unusual power or ability which only a few creative geniuses possess, but characterizes the most elementary accomplishments of animal intelligence.

Coming to strictly philosophical uses of "intuition," in Western philosophy intuition stands for an immediate, non-conceptual, experience of an object, singular or general. Intuition, according to Kant, is that mode of knowledge in which an *individual* object is given. It is opposed to intellect (or, understanding and thinking) in which a general object, a concept is thought. Kant uses the word "*Anschauung*" (intuition) to stand for a passive receptivity to what is given. It may be taken as having the same meaning as perception of a singular object only when one subtracts from it all conceptual elements. Kant opposed intuition to thought, and argued that human intuition is always sensible—which means, an object is intuited when it affects the faculty of sensibility. Intuition, for us, is receptive and passive. (Space and time are pure intuitions, which means that they are intuited without the mediation of sensations). Intellect, on the other hand, is spontaneous. We actively impose concepts on sensory data. Thus, our intuition is sensible and passive; our intellect is conceptual and spontaneous.

His successors from Fichte to Hegel, the so-called German Idealists, emphasized the idea of intellectual intuition. In self-knowledge, we intuit, they argue, our own self but this intuition is not through sensibility, it is rather through the intellectual act of reflection. Hegel emphasized that logical thinking involves intellectual intuition and that when thinking becomes perfect, it matures into an intuition of the absolute spirit.

In Indian philosophy, the Sanskrit words which may be regarded as equivalents of the term "intuition" are "*pratyakṣa*" (perception), "*aprokṣānubhūti*" (immediate experience) "*prajñā*" (the highest knowledge), or even "*pratibhā*" (an excellent ability to immediately grasp the nature of things). Perception is generally taken to mean that knowledge of an object, which arises from the contact of

sense organ with that object. It may be close to Kantian *Anschauung*, because the knowledge is sensuous and holds good only of sensible objects. As contrasted with it, the Vedāntins speak of an immediate, non-conceptual experience of the self or the *brahman*. This may be regarded as an "intuition" of the self or *brahman*. But is it to be counted as an intellectual intuition as is the case with Hegelian absolute knowledge? The *ātman* or *brahman* in Advaita Vedānta is not strictly speaking an object of knowledge, it can only be said to be known in a rather unusual sense, for ordinarily whatever is known, or can be known, is an object. On the Advaita view, the *ātman* is not strictly "known." When one says that it is known, what one means is as follows: ignorance which conceals it is removed and the spirit, which is self-shining, stands revealed without being an object of a cognitive state. It is only in this sense that the self can be said to be intuited. It is immediately experienced, without being an object of knowledge.[1] Such experience cannot be had of any possible object. It is only the spirit or pure consciousness which is self-shining and all that needs to be accomplished is the removal of ignorance that conceals it. Strictly speaking, then, there is not intuition *of ātman* or *brahman*, but rather the *ātman* or *brahman* itself is of the nature of intuition. If the Kantian consciousness is an "I think," the Advaita Vedānta consciousness is an "I intuit."

The other usages of "intuition," for example, *prajñā*, *pratibhā* in *Yogasūtras*, or the different stages of *samādhi* outlined in Yoga literature, still have the subject-object distinction and fall short of the Advaita experience of *ātman/brahman*. They all involve some kind or other knowledge *of*, even when the object of that knowledge becomes increasingly non-sensuous and spiritual; they are nevertheless objects, which the Advaita self is not.

Endnotes

1. The Advaitins hold that consciousness is self-luminous and self-luminosity is the fitness of being immediately known without being an object of any cognition (*avedyatve sati aparokṣavyavahārayogyatvaṃ svayaṃ prakāśasya lakṣaṇam*). In other words, consciousness is immediately experienced, even though it is not an object of knowledge. See Citsukha's *Tattavapradīpikā. ed.* Yogīndrānanda with *Nayanaprasādīnī* of Pratyaksvarūpa and editor's Hindi commentary, chap. 1, sec. 1.4 (Banaras: Shudarsana Prakasan Pratīsthanā, 1956), 4–5.

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Index

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